

*Jos.* THE *Craven.*  
MYSTERY  
7.5.08 OF  
INIQUITY  
UNVAILED:  
IN A  
DISCOURSE,

Wherein is held forth  
The Opposition of the *Doctrine*  
*Worship*, and *Practices* of the  
**Roman Church,**  
T. O  
The *Nature*, *Designs*, and *Characters*  
of the **Christian Faith.**

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Math. Craven  
Books



THE

## Mystery of Iniquity

UNVAILED.

**H**E that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow, is an observation which holdeth true of no part of knowledge, so much as of the knowledge of Mankind. It is some relief to him, who knows nothing of foreign wickedness, to hope there are other Nations wherein Virtue is honoured, and Religion is in esteem, which allays his regrates, when he sees Vice and Impiety abound in his Country; but if by travelling or reading, he enlarge his Horizon, and know Mankind better, his regrates will grow, when he finds the whole World lyes in wickedness. It argues a cruel and inhumane temper, to delight in beholding scenes of horror and misery, and certainly none, who either honours his Maker and Redeemer, or is a lover of Mankind, can without sorrow

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## The Mystery of

look on, and see the indignities done to God and his Son Christ, and see the Enemy of the humane race triumphing over the World, with such absolute authority and so much enraged cruelty; and that not only in the dark Regions of it, which the Sun of Righteousness hath not yet visited with his Gospel, but that where Christ should have a Throne, Satans Seat should also be, is justly surprising and astonishing. That almost all Christendom hath fallen from their first love, is what none whose eyes are open can deny; and it is little less evident, that the greater part of it hath made shipwrack, and erred from the Faith; and that the Church, whose *Faith was once spoken of throughout the world*, is now become the *Mother of the Fornications of the Earth*. It is true, the Scriptures warned us of a *falling away*, of a *mystery of iniquity*, of an *Antichrist to be revealed in due time*, and of a *Babylonish Rome*, which should bewitch the Earth with her *Sorceries*, but should be varnished over with fair colours and specious pretences, so that *mystery* should be on her forehead: Being

Being then warned of so much danger to the Christian Religion, it is a necessary (though painful) enquiry to see if this *Antichrist* be yet come, or if we must look for another.

But because some have stretched the Notion of Antichristianism so far, that things harmless and innocent come within its compass; and others have so much contracted it, that they might scape free; we are to take a view of the Nature and Designs of the Christian Religion, and to conclude from that what must be Antichristianism: It being not only a bare contradiction to some branches or parts of the Gospel (for then every error or heresie were Antichristianism) but a design and entire complex, of such opinions and practices, as are contradictory to, and subversive of, the power and life of Christianity: And if we find any such thing to be broached and received in the World, we may with the least hazard of uncharitableness, pronounce it to be Antichristianism, and if it be acted or animated by any Head, he may be concluded Antichrist.

The Designs of the Christian Religion run betwixt these four heads: The first is, to give us right apprehensions of the Nature and Attributes of God, that we may conceive aright of him, and adore him suitably to his Nature, and according to his Will, and thereby be admitted to a free converse with him, and become partakers of the Divine Nature. How little of God was known by the twinklings of Natures Light, even to the better and wiser part of the World, *Tullies* Books of the Nature of the Gods do sufficiently inform us? But if the Philosophers were so much to seek in it, what shall we expect from the Vulgar? And indeed *Homers Iliads*, and *Ovids Metamorphosis*, were wretched Systems of Divinity; and yet such, and such like, were the sentiments of the Nations about the Godhead. It is true, the seed of *Abraham* were delivered from that darkness, and knew God by his Name *Jehovah*, and had Laws and Ordinances given them by God; yet their Worship was so carnal, and did so strike upon, and affect the senses, that we will be

be soon satisfied, it was not so sublime and free as became the Spirituality of the Divine Nature, and so was only fitted for the Infancy of the People of God; but by Christ *the mystery that lay hid from ages and generations, was revealed; for he declared the Father, and revealed him, and taught us to renounce Idols and vanities, and to serve the living God, commanding all men every where to repent, the times of ignorance wherein God winked at Idolatry, being then over.* That so Mankind being Gods Off-spring, might feel after him, and not worship him any more in the blinding grossness of Idolatry, but in a pure spiritual manner; and whereas *the Law came by Moses, by Christ came Grace and Truth.* Grace, in opposition to the severity of the Law; and Truth, as opposed (not to Falshood) but to the Figures and Shadows of *Moses his Law*; and therefore God is to be worshipped in Spirit and Truth, in opposition to the Carnal Ordinances, and Typical Rites, which shadowed out the Truth in the Law.

The second branch of the Christian Religion

Religion is, to hold forth the method of mans reconciliation with his Maker. For the sense of all mankind agrees in this, that sin is an indignity done to God, which deserveth punishment, and cannot be expiated by any service man can do: It was therefore necessary there should be a mean found for encouraging sinners to imbrace a Religious life, of which all had reason to despair, without pardon were offered to penitents, upon the change of their lives. Now this was that, the *Heathen* could not dream how to procure: It is true the *Jews* had sacrifices for expiating of sin, but these could never quiet their consciences; since the common sense of mankind tells, that the blood of beasts cannot appease God. The mystery therefore of the reconciliation of sinners to God, is the proper character of the Christian-Religion: which holds forth to us how the *eternal word* was made man, and endured unspeakable sufferings for the sins of men, even to the death of the Cross, and was raised up by God, and carried to Heaven, where he is vested with all power and



and authority, and by the merits of his death hath a right to grant pardon, give grace, and confer eternal life on all that believe on him; by whom God conveys all things to us, and through whom we are to offer up all our worship to God, he being the *Mediator betwixt God and man*.

The third head of the Christian-Religion is, to teach the perfectest, clearest and most divine rules, for advancing of the souls of men to the highest perfection of their natures. It is true, noble pieces of morality were acknowledged and taught by the *Heathen* Philosophers; and the Books of the Old Testament have the Doctrin of virtue, purity, humility and meekness laid open very fully: but without derogating from these, it must be acknowledged, that as the Doctrin of Christianity, teacheth all these precepts with clearer rules, and fuller directions; so they were in it recommended by the example of its Author, backed with the strongest Motives, and enforced with the greatest Arguments. In these are the lessons of purity, chastity, ingenuity, humility,



lity, meekness, patience, and generosity; so clearly laid down, and so fully evinced, that no man who is so much a man, as to love these things whereby his mind may be improved, to all that is truly great and noble, but must be enamoured of the Christian-Religion, as soon as he is taught it.

The fourth design of Religion is, to unite mankind in the closest bonds of peace, friendship, and charity, which it doth not only by the rules prescribed for the tempering our passions, forgiving of injuries, and loving our Enemies, and by the Doctrin of obedience to those in authority over us, but likewise by associating us into one Body, called the *Church*, wherein we are to worship God jointly, and to be coupled in one by the use of the Sacraments, which are the Ligaments of the Body.

Having thus viewed the great designs of the Christian Religion in the several branches and parts thereof, I shall add to this, the main distinguishing *Characters* of our Religion, which are also four.

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The first is, *its verity*; that it is not founded on the rattles of Persons concerned, nor on the reveries of Dotards, nor received with a blind credulity, being founded on the Authority of the great God, which appeared visibly in those that published it, chiefly in the Person of *Jesus Christ*, who by his Miracles that were wrought in the sight of all the People, even his enemies looking on, and not being able to deny them; but chiefly by his resurrection from the dead, was declared to be the Son of God, which was seen and known by many, who followed not cunningly devised fables, but were the Eye-witnesses of his Majesty, who went in his Name, and published it to the World, confirming it by miracles and mighty wonders, attesting it, notwithstanding of all the persecutions they met with, most of them confirming it with their blood: And this Doctrine was received and believed by the better part of Mankind, though it being contrary to all the interests of the flesh, whose mortification it teacheth, its reception cannot

not be imputed to credulity or interest.

The second *Character* of our Religion is, its *genuine simplicity* and *perspicuity*, that all its *Doctrines* and *Rules* are clearly and distinctly held out to us, not like the *Heathen Divinity*, much whereof lay in dark *Oracles* in the Books of the *Sybil*s, and in other pretended *Mysteries*, which none but the *Priests* might handle and expound. The *Jewish Religion* was also veiled with *Types* and *Figures*, so that it was not easie to see the substance and truth through all these foldings and shadows. But the glory of the *Christian Religion*, as to this particular, is nobly laid out by *St. Paul*, in these words, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* *But we all with open face, as in a glass, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The third *Character* is, the *reasonableness* of the *Christian Religion*, it containing none of these absurd incredible things, which abounded among the *Heathens*, nor of these *Rites* of *Judaism*, the reasons whereof, beside the *Will of God* in enjoying

enjoyning them, could not be assigned; but both the Doctrines and Precepts of the Christian Religion are fitted for Mankind, and so congenial to his Nature, that they well deserve the designation of *reasonable service*, or rational worship, God having made our Souls and them of a piece.

And the fourth *Character* of our Religion is, *its easiness*; *Christs yoke is easie, and his burden light*, Mat. 11. 30. Wherein we are freed from all the barbarous and cruel Rites of *Gentilism*, and from the oppressive Bondage of *Judaism*, which was a Law of Ordinances, and a yoke that our fathers were not able to bear; but that we are called to by Christ, is so simple, so easie, and so plain, that well may we say, *his Commandments are not grievous*, 1 Joh. 5. 3.

Having given this hint of the Design and Characters of the Christian Religion, I hold it not necessary to dwell on a further deduction of those generals into more particular branches, nor to make this *scheme* of Religion good by any longer

longer proof, the position I have laid down, being so obvious to the reason of every considering person; wherefore I go on to examine if there be any such *system* of Doctrins or Opinions, among pretenders to Christianity, which tends to the overthrowing and enervating of this whole design, and whose Characters are directly opposite to these I have mentioned; and the less avowed, and the more disguised that Society be, as it is more likely to prevail, since Error and Vice are not so formidable in their own colours, as when veiled with the pretences of Truth and Virtue, so it will better agree with that great Character the Prophecies give of this defection, that it was a *Mystery*, and had *Mystery on its forehead*, Rev. 17, 15.

And here remains the sad part of my discourse, for what lover of mankind can with pleasure either satisfy his own reason, or convince the judgment of others, in a matter the issue whereof is to prove so great a part of the Christian Societies to be *Antichristian* and adulterate, and certainly

certainly if my love to truth, and the honour of my Redeemer and his Gospel, and by consequence a zeal for souls, did not engage me to this search, I could easily quit the Task, and chuse more easie and pleasant subjects for the exercise of my thoughts; but the wisdom of God having declared it a part of wisdom to observe the characters of the *Antichristian* *beast*, I therefore, though not without pain, engage in the survey of it.

And first, in the entry it will be a bad Omen, of no good to be expected from any society that shall study to keep her members in ignorance, and to barr them the study of the holy Scriptures, which being the Revelation of the whole counsel of God, and written by plain and simple men, and at first directed to the use of the rude illiterate vulgar, for teaching them the Mysteries of Godliness, and the path of Life; it is a shrewd indication that if any studie to hide this light under a Candlestick, and to keep it in an unknown Tongue, or forbid the Body of *Christians* the use of it (though its native



tive tendency be to enlighten the understanding, and to enflame the will, it being given out by God for that end) that those must be conscious to themselves of great deformity to that rule, and apprehend, that if it were more known, their Doctrin would be less believed, especially since the hardest part of the Scriptures are the writings of the Old Testament: And yet these were communicated to all of that dispensation, who were commanded by Christ to search them, and who did educate their Children in them, continuing that Holy care to a high degree, even to this day. Now except it be said that it is fitter all be kept under darkness in the new Dispensation, than was in the Old, no account can be given, for the zeal is used in any Church, to keep their Children in such ignorance; and yet this is a part of the distinguishing Characters of the new Dispensation from the old, that light hath appeared in it. Now all may know how guilty those of Rome are in this: What pains are taken to detract from the authority of the Scriptures?





tures? how they quarrel? sometimes its darkness, sometimes its ambiguousness, sometimes the genuineness of its Originals, and always complain of its being too much perused, and therefore let as little of it be put in *vulgar Tongues* as can be; read it publickly in an unknown Tongue, and permit no private person the use of it, without allowance from his *Confessor*: Of which, though in some places the Reformation hath made them more liberal, yet where there is no hazard of that, they betray their aversion for the Scriptures too palpably in all their Writings and Discourses.

But now to pursue my design more closely, I must call to mind the first branch of the Christian Religion, which teacheth how God is to be worshiped in a pure and spiritual way; and see how far this is contradicted. And here I must consider the Idolatry of the *Gentiles*, which was of two kinds. The one was, when the true God was worshiped in a false manner: The other was, when divine adoration was offered to those who were

no gods. Of the first I shall reckon two kinds; the first was, when an Image or Figure was erected for representing the Deity to the senses, and adoration offered to God through it: In which case, though perhaps the herd did formerly worship the Image, yet their *Philosophers* declared, they meant these only for exciting the senses and imagination, and not for being worshipped; much less that the Deity should be conceived like unto them, as we find both in *Celsus Julian*, and *Maximus Tyrius*. Now this form of adoration is contrary both to the Divine Essence and Command. For God must either be conceived like such an Image or not: If like to it, then a great indignity is done the Divine Nature; greater than if a Toad or Worm were set out as the Image of a King, to have civil reverence payed to it; since he is of his own Essence Incomprehensible, and Invisible, and so hath no shape nor figure. In word, it abuses our thoughts of God when we figure him to our selves. But if we conceive God not like such

Image; then why is it used, except to be a snare to the vulgar, who will be ready to think God like unto it: and certain it is, that whatever the more refined or abstracted Wits may conceive of these Images, yet the vulgar offer up their Adorations directly to them, and conceive God to be like unto them.

This Worship is also contrary to the Divine Precept, who made it one of the ten Commandments, which himself delivered to his people; *Exod. 20. 4. That no graven Image nor likeness should be made to be worshipped.* And the reason given, shews the Law was perpetual, *for God is ever jealous of the Glory due to him.* Now what kindness those of Rome have to this command, may be guessed by their striking it out of their Catechisms, as if it were only an appendix of the first: But if we read the whole Old Testament, it will furnish us with large discoveries of Gods displeasure at this kind of worship, to which the Jews were so inclinable; but God would not give his praise to graven Images, *Isa. 42. 8.* Now here it is to be

But we remem-

remembred, that the Jewish Dispensation was low and carnal, when compared to that to which we are called: If then this Worship was not allowed of to them, it is much less to be allowed of among Christians.

Another part of the false Worship of the Heathens was, that they believed the Deity and Divine Power was by mystical and magical ways affixed to some Bodies, as the Sun or Stars are; or to some Temples, and to some *Ancilia* and *Paladia*, which they believed came down from Heaven, *Acts* 19. 35. to which they held God to be present and adherent, and therefore worshipped them. And of kin to this was the Israelites their worshipping the Calf in the wilderness, *Exo* 32. for it is clear, they looked on it their God who had brought them out of *Egypt*, therefore could not possibly be adoring the *Egyptian God that was an Ox*; but the Feast that was to *Jehovah*, and the *Psalm* 106. vers. 20. that says, *they changed their glory into the similitude of an Ox* do shew that they worshipped the

God, though in a false manner. Neither is it to be imagined, that *Aaron* the Prophet and Saint of the Lord, though very guilty in this matter, could for all that be so criminal, as to make a false god: But the most satisfying account of his fault is, that when he saw God in the Mount, *Exod. 24. 10.* God appeared in that figure that was afterwards in the most Holy Place, which was to be framed after the pattern seen in the Mount. And if so, then God appeared between the Cherubims; now the Figure of a Cherub, was the same with that of a Calf in its hinder parts, *Ezek. 1. 7.* And if we compare *vers. 10.* of that *chap.* with *Ezek. 10. 14.* what in the first place is called *the face of an Ox*, is in the second called *the face of a Cherub*, which tells us clearly what was the Figure of the Cherub. And therefore *Aaron* seeing the People desired a sensible Symbol of Gods Presence among them, he made choice of that he had seen in the Mount about the Divine Glory, and yet all that did not excuse his fault in the sight of God.

In like manner, after the Tabernacle and Temple were set up, wherein were the Cherubin, when *Jeroboam* revolted, he set up *Calves*, 1 *King*. 12. 28, 29. as is probable upon the same account, but no doubt continued in all points the Worship of the true God, as it was at *Jerusalem*, as might be proved from many particulars; but the sin wherewith he made *Israel* to sin, was the worshipping of the true God by a false Symbol. The like account is to be given of the Idolatry of *Gideons Ephod*, *Judg*. 8. 27. And of the worshipping the *Brass Serpent*, 2 *King*. 18. 4. where certainly the true God was adored, and yet the People went a whoring from him in that Worship.

And here the Title of *Whoredome*, given to Idolatry so often in the Old Testament, is to be considered; the importance whereof is, that God by covenanting with his People, is married to them, to be their God; and the conjugal Duty they owe him, is Adoration: When therefore other Creatures have any share of that bestowed on them, spiritual whoredom is committed.

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Now how sad the Application of this to the Christian Church must be, all may judge; who know how great a part of Christendom worship God by Images; and how the adored and incomprehensible Trinity is painted *us an old man with a child in his arms; and a dove over the childs head; though no man hath seen the Father at any time; Joh. 6. 46.* and the Son as God can no more be represented by an Image, than the Father; and the Holy Ghost, though once appearing in the symbolical representation of a Dove, can not without Idolatry be represented and worshipped under that figure. Neither can any apology be offered for this, which could not with the same reason have cleared both Jews and Gentiles of Idolatry. And whatever more abstracted Minds may think of these Images, yet none that considers the simplicity of the Vulgar, the frailty of Man, and his inclination to apprehend all things as sensible, can doubt but that the Rabble do really conceive of God as like these figures, and do plainly worship them. It

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is further to be considered, that though the Son of God was Man, yet as Man he is not to be worshipped; and therefore the setting out of Figures and Statues for his Humane Nature (which on the way are no real adumbrations, but only the fancies of Painters) and worshipping these as the Images of the Son of God, is no less Idolatry, than to worship the Father as an Old Man.

And further, the Worship of the Mass is Idolatry, as evidently as any piece of *Gentilism* ever was: For if it be certain that Christ is not in the Hostie, which shall be afterwards made out, then to adore him as there, must be Idolatrous. Neither will it serve for excuse, to say that Christ is truly worshipped as present; and if he be not there, it is only a mistake about the Presence, but no Idolatry can be committed, the Worship being offered to a proper Object, who is God. But if this Apology free them of Idolatry, it will also clear those Heathens, who worshipped some Statues or Creatures, in which they con-

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ceived God was present; so that they might have pleaded, it was the great and true God they adored, believing him there present, as their Fathers had formerly believed. But he were very gentle to Idolaters, who upon such a plea, would clear them of that crime. What then is to be said of that Church, that holds it the greatest piece of her Religion, to adore the Bread with the same devotion they would pay to Christ, were he visibly present; who call the Bread God, carry it about in Processions, and worship it with all the Solemnity imaginable. And finally, the Worship they give the Cross, is likewise an adoring of God under a Symbol and Representation. And thus we have seen the *parallel of Rome-Heathen, and Rome-Christian*, runs but too too just.

But the next kind of the Heathens Idolatry, was their worshipping of others beside God, whom they held of two ranks: Some that were so pure, that they never dwelt in Bodies: Others they judged to be the Souls of deceased Men, after

after their death acknowledged and honoured with divine honour. And this kind of Idolatry was first begun at *Babylon*, where *Ninus* made the Statue of his Father *Belus* be set up, and worshipped it: And from him all these lesser gods were called *Belim*, or *Baalim*. Now concerning these, the *Heathens* believed that they were certain intermedial powers, that went betwixt God and men, by whom all good things were conveyed to mortals, by whom also all our services were offered to the gods. Thus the Nations had gods many, and lords many, 1 Cor. 8. 5. And these lesser Deities or Demons they adored, by erecting Statues to them about their burial places, where they built Temples for them, and worshipped them. And from this hint of *Babylons* being the Mother of this kind of Idolatry, we may guess, why the Apostacy of that City, which in *St. Johns* dayes, did reign over the Kingdoms of the earth, *Rev.* 17. 18. is shadowed forth under the name of *Babylon*; to hold out that the corruption it was to fall into, was to be

of a kind with that begun in *Babylon*; and the Character of the Whore doth likewise agree well with this.

Now if we compare with this the worship of Angels and Saints in the *Roman* Church, we shall find the parity just and exact. For after the conversion of the *Roman* Empire, it is not to be denied but that in order to the gaining of the *Heathen* World to a compliance with Christianity, the *Christians* did as near as was possible accommodate themselves to the Heathenish customs: And therefore in stead of their gods, they set up the *Demon* and *Baal-worship*, to the Apostles and other Saints and Martyrs; which *Theodorat* doth most ingeniously acknowledge to have been let in the stead of their gods. They became afterwards so exact in the parallel, that as the Heathens had of these lesser gods for every Nation, so there was a Saint appointed for every Nation. St. *Andrew* for *Scotland*, St. *George* for *England*, St. *Patrick* for *Ireland*, and many more for other Nations: And as every house among the *Heathens* had their

their household god, so every person was taught to have a *tutelar Saint* and *Angel*. And as among the *Heathen* there were gods for all Trades, for all Sicknesses, and for every Virtue; so in Antichristianism there were Saints for every Disease, for every Profession, and for all the Graces. And as the *Heathens* built Temples for them, so did also *Babylonish Rome*. And here an odd remark is in my way of this conformity, that the *Pantheon* at Rome dedicated in Augustus his time to Cybele the mother of the gods, and to all the gods, was afterwards consecrated to the Virgin and all the Saints. And as the *Heathens* offered Prayers, made Vows, observed Days, brought Presents, used Processions in honour to these lesser gods, and worshiped their Statues and Images. So all this by degrees crept into *Rome-Christian*, as might be branched out in more particulars than the nature of so short a discourse will allow of. It is true, the worship of Images came not in before the *eighth Century*; but after that time it engaged all that received it into a high degree of madness, for advancing that Heathenish

piece of Worship. And shall I here tell what is known to all who have seen the forms of that Church? how you shall find their Churches all over dressed up with Images and Statues, gorgeously apparelled, and well adorned; where the poor vulgar are lying prostrate before them, saying their Devotions, and perhaps washing the feet of their Shrines with their tears, and with great affection kissing the hem of their Garments: And if through the tricks of the Priest, the Image seem to nod or smile on them, (which is not unfrequent) with what joy do they go away, as if some Angel had saluted them from Heaven. And here it were too long to reckon up the Abominations of this Saint-worship which are offered to the *Virgin*, with the Blasphemous Titles given her, and Prayers made to her; *as if she were more merciful and gentle to sinners, than her blessed Son.* What shall I tell of the whole *Psalms* turned to her? The words of *Goddeſs* and *Lady*, being put in the place of *God* and *Lord*: And that from the *eleventh Century*, in which



which the form of the numbering their Prayers by Beads was begun, *ten Go to the Virgin, for one, to God.* How many more Worship her, then do her Son? How many more Churches are built to her, than to her Son? And how many *Pilgrimages* are made to her Shrines and Reliques? And thus I think little doubting will remain, that the worship of the *Egalim* begun at *Babylon*, is now set up in the *Christian Rome*.

Now how contrary this is to the Divine Nature, common reason may suggest: as also to the exaltation of the Person of Christ, *Isa. 42. 8. God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another.* We have but one Lord *Jesus Christ*, *1 Cor. 8. 6.* who by his most precious blood shed for us, purchased the honour of being Mediatour betwixt God and Man: And therefore *Christians* ought only to make mention of his Name. Beside the great evil of Idolatry is that it debases the soul of the profane worshiper, for like them are all they that trust in them, *Psal. 115. 8.*

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leads away the mind from that inward free and spiritual converse, and fellowship with God, to which the Gospel invites us; and carries it out into an external, sensible, and dead Religion. It stifles the power of true Piety, making it die out in formal and stupifying superstition: And the Plagues which Heaven pours out on those ungodly worshippers, are heavy, and great. A black Roll of them in the end of the first Chap. to the *Romans*, which were the Consecrations on their not glorifying of God, as God, which is branched out into the two kinds I have discoursed of. The first is, v. 23. *they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible man, &c.* And the second is, v. 25. *who worshipped and served the Creature more than (or besides) the Creator.* And it would raise horror in sober minds to tell how much the sin of the flesh, particularly *the sin of Sodom*, which is first reckoned in that dismal Catalogue, abounds with these of this spiritual *Babylon*.

And will the poor distinctions of *Dulia* and

and *Latria* save them from this guilt: Alas! these are parts of the Mystery by which they would veil their Abominations; but their nakedness is not hid with this thin veil. For we see how simply all religious Worship offered to Creatures displeased God: Neither did the Prophets tell the *Israelites* that a kind of Worship called *Dulia*, or *Service*, might be payed to Creatures, but the *Latria*, or *Adoration*, was only proper to God; indeed they dreamed not of this subtilty; and when St. John offered to fall down before the Angel, he forewarns him not to do it, as being not only his fellow-creature, but his fellow-servant, Revel. 19. 10. by which all that Prostration for worship is declared unlawful, and what can be called Adoration, if to offer Prayers, to make Vows, to sing Hymns, to observe Days, and to build Churches, be not such? These nice distinctions which the Schoolmen have devised, will serve in no stead in the great day when Gods jealousy shall burn like fire against all that have dishonoured him

by this profane worshipping of Creatures. And it is certain, that however some speculative People may have distinct Notions of these kinds of Worship, yet the Vulgar, in their Practice, make no difference at all, but place all their trust in them, fly to them in their troubles as to their refuge and strong hold; whereby that faith and confidence which is only due to God and his Son is abated, so much of it being bestowed on Creatures. And what a baseness of Mind doth it discover, for Men, to whom God hath revealed so much of the Riches of his Grace, and hath allowed constant and free access to his Throne, with the largest encouragements and assurances of being heard and accepted by him; and who hath given Mankind a Mediator, who in the likeness of our flesh did express the greatest and freest love imaginable, dying for us, and being now our Advocate and Intercessor with his Father; that instead of conversing immediately with God and Christ in the Exercises of Devotion, we should betake

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our selves to a dead and liveless invocating of those, of whose hearing us we can have no assurance, and in which there can be no comfort nor true joy found.

So much of the Object of Worship, the Manner of it is next to be considered: We observed before, that God called us in the Gospel to a lively and spiritual Worship; and this was first in opposition to the forceries of the Gentile Worship, and next to the heavy yoke of the Jewish Bondage. How much of Sorcery and Enchantments was used in Heathenism, as every one that gives account of their Forms do mention; but indeed all they used was nothing, if compared to the Enchantments of the *Roman Church*; and first of all, can any thing look like a Charm, than the worshipping God in an unknown Tongue? in which the Worshipper is capable of no converse with God by these parts of Worship which he doth not understand. Next the muttering so large portions of the Worship, chiefly in the Office of the Mass, what doth it look like but the mumbling.

bling of Charm, But shall I here tell of  
the charming of Water, of Salt, of Wax-candles,  
for driving away of Devils? Shall I next  
tell of the christening of Bells, the hallowing  
of Oyl, the touching of Beads, the touching of  
little Pebbles; which shall have a virtue  
against Sickness of all kinds, Thunders  
and Lightnings, and Tentations of the  
Devil? Shall I next tell of the consecrating  
of Roses, Agnus Dei's, Medals, and the like?  
Or, shall I tell of their Exorcisms and Charms  
for driving out Devils, with all the strange  
actions used in them? Shall I mention  
the Reliques, and all the virtues believed  
to be in them, yea and derived from them?  
Shall I mention their priviledged Altars,  
their Jubilees, the Prayers upon which In-  
dulgences are granted, their solemn Pro-  
cessions, together with all the small tricks  
are used in every part of their Wor-  
ship? All this should be endless. These  
things cannot but eat out the power of  
Religion, and introduce a dry and empty  
skellet of enchanted Actions, instead of  
that lively Image of God, which the  
Christian Religion designs to restore in  
us.

In a word, shall I tell how the Sacramental Actions are polluted by the superfoetation of so many new Rites, whereby they are wholly changed from their original Simplicity. In Baptism, *instead of washing with water in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; how have they added so many adulterated Rites? the Child must be thrice blown upon, then a Charm used for turning the Devil out of him, he must be anointed with holy Oyl, and hallowed Salt must be put in his mouth, sanctified Garments also must be put on him, and a holy Wax-candle in his hand, and the Priest's Spittle must be gently stroaked upon him. Whether doth all this look like the Simplicity of the Spouse of Christ, or the Attire of the Harlot? And in the other Sacrament, a great deal more adoe is made, so that any indifferent Spectator, who were not warned of it, would swear it were a solemn piece of Pageantry; the Priest must come in cloathed with rich embroidered



red Vestments, then he goes to the Altar, sometimes reads on the one side, then he turns to the other; Often he bows, and kisses, and crosses, sometimes single, sometimes thrice repeated crosses: Most of the Office he mutters, though what he says is all alike understood, being in an unknown tongue: Sometimes he turns to the People, and gives them a short *Barbarian* Benediction: Then he goes on till he come to the five wonder-working words: And then instead of the Bread, which the force of these words hath driven to nothing, behold a god, to be worshipped by the Spectators. And after the adoration, the god is to be devoured by the Priest, which made the *Arabian* say, *he never saw a Sect of Religion so foolish as the Christians were, who with their teeth devoured the god they had adored.* Certainly all this looks so like a piece of extravagance, especially if the simplicity of the first institution be considered; that many will doubt if it be possible that such worship can be received in any corner

of the Christian World. And by these hints, though a hundred more could be instanced, let it be guessed what is become of the simplicity of the *Christian Religion*, when it is so vitiated in all the parts and branches of it: And whether that genuine sincere spirituality appear in it, which the Gospel holds forth to the world: These things having a native tendency for leading away the soul from attending upon God, in her acts of worship; which is the only thing for which external worship is to be continued in, that ~~in it~~ we may jointly concur to converse with our Maker. If from this I should reckon up all the tricks are used in secreter worship, what stories should I tell of the pattering over the Beads, of the multiplying little unintelligible Prayers, the using of Penances, some whereof are ridiculous for their gentleness, and others of them are as formidable for their horror, and fitter for the *Priests of Baal*, or the *worshippers of Diana Taurica*, then for those that worship the living God with joy and gladness of heart.

Now

Now by the performance of these, the simple deluded people imagine themselves reconciled to God, and secured from his wrath: And so go about them merely in the opinion of a charm.

But I must next shew how the multiplicity of the Jewish rites was also brought in upon Christendom, though Christ came to set us at liberty from that *Pedagogy*, which was made up of Ordinances and lifeless Precepts, *that could not make the doer thereof perfect*: nothing being enjoined in the Christian Religion, but that which was of it self easie and proper for the great design of purifying our souls. Now such as have brought in a yoke of ordinances, that have no tendency to the cleansing of our souls, but oppress us with their tyrannical burdenfomness, being both heavy, and numerous, must be looked on as the introducers, of a new Judaism, for oppressing the Christian world; what a heap of new superadded forms have the High Priests of *Rome* brought upon these who stoop to their tyranny? And how much sanctity do they place in them;

them; enjoyning severer censures on the violation of these, than on the greatest transgressions against either the Moral or Positive Laws of God? How many holy days have they instituted? How much distinction of meats, of fasting, and abstinence? And how like are their Jubilees and Pilgrimages to the Jubilees and yearly trotting up to *Jerusalem*, which was among the *Jews*? In a word, there is not a piece of worship about which there is not a greater appendage of vain pompous, and withall burdensom Ceremonies, then were among the *Jews*. Shall I here mention the five superadded Sacraments, to the two instituted by Christ, with all the rites belonging to each of them, or recount all the rites in their multifarious ordinations? Shall I tell of the laying up the Bodies when dead, and of the forms of their Burials? The burning of Lamps in the clearest day, together with the Incense that perfumes the worship, which are clear pieces of antiquated Judaism. In a word, no part of the parallel holds more exactly, than that

that they are zealous of the traditions of their Fathers, whereby the Commandments of God are made of none effect; and that they honour God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him: And worship him in vain, teaching for Doctrins the Commandments of men, Matth. 15. 8, 9.

And hitherto I have discoursed upon the first limb of Antichristianism, and have discovered too evident indications of the contradictions is in it, to the first branch of the design of Christianity; whereby the worship of God is partly adulterate, and partly smothered by a heavy and troublesome load of useless and lifeless performances; which must needs lead out the soul from an inward attending on God, or free converse with him.

The second branch of Christianity is, the holding forth that Mysterious contrivance of the wisdom and goodness of God, for reconciling the world to himself, by his dear Son; whom he gave to the death for us, and also raised

raised up, making him both Lord, and Christ. Whose glory and dignity is vulgarly branched out in these his three Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. By the first of which, he revealed the Father, and his whole council to mankind, in plain and simple discourses, afterwards committed to writing by the faithful eye and ear-witnesses of his Majesty. His Prophetick office therefore is chiefly acknowledged, in our grateful receiving these discoveries, and our studying to adjust both our Faith and Practice to that unerring rule. But can any thing be more contradictory to this, than to keep the knowledge of these writings from Christians, to accuse their darkness and defects, and to apprehend great danger from their diligent perusal, to vilify that sacred study, preferring the lame and lifeless discourses of men, to the words of eternal wisdom? For we must consider that our study of the Gospel, is of the same nature with a personal following of Christ, when on earth, to see his miracles and hear his doctrine, the same is also to be  
said



said of the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles. Now to bar the Vulgar from this, is to hinder them to hear and see Christ and his Apostles, as if that were a Priviledge restricted to Church-men. What shall be then said of these, *who call the Scriptures a Nose of Wax, the Source of all Heresies, a Book written not on Design, but upon particular Emergents*, and do assert its incompleatness, unless made up by the Traditions of the Church? Is not this to add to the Words of that Book, and to accuse the faithful *witness* of unfaithfulness? But worse than all this is held by these, who will have all the Authority of the Scriptures to depend on the Church, which must be believed in the first place.

But here a great difference is to be made betwixt the testimony of a *witness*, and the authority of a *Judge*; the former is not denied to the Church, and so the *Jews* had the Oracles of God committed to them; but that doth not prove the Authority of their *Synhedrim* infallible, or superiour to Scripture; and in this case more cannot be ascribed to the  
Chri-

Christian Church, than was proper to the Jewish in our Saviours time. But further, if the Scripture be to be believed on the testimony of the Church, then upon what account is the Church first believed? It cannot be said, because of any testimony in Scripture, for if it give authority to the Scriptures, it cannot receive its authority from their testimony. How then shall it be proved that the Church must be believed? or must it be taken from their own word? and yet no other reason can be given to prove the Church infallible. For to say that they have continued in a Succession of Bishops from the Apostles days, concludes nothing, unless it be first proved that the Doctrine of the Apostles was of God; otherwise, the *Mahometan* Religion is as much to be believed, since for many Ages a Succession of Priests have believed it. Further, the Greek Churches drive up the Series of their Bishops to the Apostles days, as well as the Roman; why then should not their Authority be likewise acknowledged infallible? In fine, the

must

must the Vulgar go and examine the Successions of the Bishops, and judge about all the dubious Elections, whether the Conveyance have been interrupted or not? Certainly were this to be done, it were an impossible Atchievement, and harder than the study of the Originals of both Testaments: Therefore the Vulgar must simply believe the Authority of the Church on her own testimony, which is the most absurd thing imaginable, and this to every individual, will resolve into the testimony of their Priest. Behold then a goodly Foundation for building our Faith upon!

Christs Prophetick Office is also invaded, by the pretence of the Churches Infallibility in expounding Scriptures; for if this be granted, the whole Authority will be devolved on the Church, for by this Doctrine she may teach what she will, and were the Scripture evidence never so full to the contrary, yet whatever wrested Exposition she offer, though visibly contrary to the plain meaning of the words, must be believed. But with whom

whom this Power and Authority is lodged, is not agreed to among themselves; some yielding it to the High Priest of the Church, when in his Chair, others to the great *Sanhedrim* of *Christendom* in a *General Council*, others to both jointly, but all this is asserted without proof, for that of Christs, of *telling the Church*, *Mat. 18. 17.* so often repeated by them, is meant of particular offences, and so is restricted to the case of differences among Brethren, and relates not to points of Doctrine. Besides, the Context of these Words doth clearly shew them applicable to every Parochial Church, and yet their Infallibility cannot be asserted. So it is clear, that Christ doth only speak of a jurisdiction for quieting of differences among the Brethren.

That of *the gates of Hell their noise prevailing against the Church*, *Mat. 16. 18.* proves not the pretence of Infal-  
libility. And indeed the Translation of that place deserves Amendment and instead of *hell*, that Word is to

be rendred grave; so that the meaning of the Phrase is, Death (which is the mouth and gate through which we pass into the Grave, and is so used by Greek Writers) shall never prevail against the Church; that is, the Church shall never die.

Neither will that of *the Spirit of truth leading out into all truth*, Joh. 16. 13. advance the Cause a whit, since that promise relates to all Believers; and it is a part of the happiness of the new Dispensation, that all in it shall be taught of God. And the promise of *founding the Church on St. Peter*, Matth. 16. saith as little; for suppose the Rock on whom the Church were to be built, were St. Peter himself, which I shall not much contravert, that is not peculiar unto him, since we are all built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, and on the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem are written the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb; but what will that prove for a series of the Bishops of Rome?

And finally, for the *keyes of the Kingdom*.

*Kingdom of Heaven*, Matth. 16. 19. their being given to St. Peter, that saith no more, but that he was to open the Gospel which is usually called, *the Kingdom of God*, or of *Heaven* in the New Testament. Now the use of keys being to open the door, this was peculiar St. Peter's honour, who did first publish the Gospel both to Jews and Gentiles, and in particular did first receive the Gentiles into the new Dispensation. But this hath no relation to the Bishops of *Rome*, nor to the pretended infallibility of that See.

That which hath the fairest appearance of reason is, that if there be no absolute unerring Court on earth, for deciding of controversies, there shall be no end of them, but every private man may upon the pretence of some ill understood place of Scripture break the unity of the Church, and so the peace of the Church is in hazard of being irrecoverably lost. But how specious soever this may appear, it hath no weight in it: For it is certain that vice, as well as error, is destructive.



destructive of Religion, and it will be no  
imputation on our Religion, that the  
one be no more guarded against, than the  
other is; if then there be no authority  
for repressing Vice, but the outward dis-  
cipline of the Church; it is not incon-  
gruous there be no other authority for  
suppressing of error, but that same of  
the Discipline of the Church. It is cer-  
tainly, a peece of humility, for a man to  
suspect his own thoughts, when they lye  
cross to the Sentiments of the guides and  
leaders of the Church: But withal, a  
man ought to be in all he does, *fully per-  
suaded in his own mind*, and we are com-  
manded *to try the spirits, and not to believe  
every spirit*, 1 Joh. 4. 1. Now reason be-  
ing the chief excellency of man, and  
that wherein the Divine Image doth  
mainly consist, it were very absurd to  
deny man a rational judging and discer-  
ning of these things wherein his eternal  
interest is most concerned. Besides the  
nature of Religion, it being a thing supe-  
rior to the powers of the soul, shews that  
man must have a conviction of the  
truth

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truth of it on his mind, and that he cannot be bound in contradiction to his own apprehensions, to receive any opinions merely upon the testimony of others.

If to confirm all this, I should add all that can be brought from History for proving that General Councils to have erred in matters of Faith; or that Popes have been Hereticks, or that they have been anathematized as such, by other Popes and General Councils, I should be too tedious. But in end, how shall the Vulgar know the definitions of Councils, or the Decrees of Popes? Or must they be blindly determined by the Priests assertion? Certainly, this were to expose them to the greatest hazards, since they are not suffered to found their Faith upon the Scriptures: Nor doth the Church reveal her Doctrines to them, so that their Faith must be resolved upon the bare Testimony of a Priest, who is perhaps both ignorant and licentious. And by this we may judge to what a pass the souls of the people are brought by this Doctrine. In a word,

we are not the servants of men; nor  
 bound to their Authority; for none can  
 be a Judge, but where he hath power  
 both to try and to coerce: Now none  
 but God can either search our hearts, or  
 change them; for as no humane power  
 can know our thoughts, so neither can it  
 turn them, which are not in our own  
 power, much less in the power of o-  
 others; therefore our Consciences can,  
 and must only fall within Gods jurisdic-  
 tion: And since the renovation of the  
 Image of God consists in Knowledge,  
 and Religion designs an union of our  
 souls to Divine Truth, that we may  
 freely converse with it, it will follow,  
 that all these pretences of absolute au-  
 thority and infallibility in Teaching, are  
 contrary to Christs Prophetick Office;  
 who came to *reveal the Father to us.*

The second of Jesus Christs Offi-  
 ces, was the Priestly, without which  
 the former had never been effectual;  
 for had we known never so perfectly  
 the Will of God, without a method  
 had been laid down for reconciling

sinners to him, it was in vain to think of Religion, since nothing sinners could do was able to appease God, or expiate sin; but this was fully done by the Sacrifice of that Lamb of God, *who became sin for us, and bare our sins on his own Body, in whom we have redemption, even forgiveness of sin through his Blood,* 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Ephes. 1. 7. If then any have derogated from the value of this satisfaction, they have offered the utmost indignity to the highest love; and committed the crime of the greatest ingratitude imaginable; who would requite the most inconcievable love, with such a Sacrilegious attempt: But, how guilty are they of this, who would set the Merits and works of men, in an equality with the Blood of God: as if by these, we were justified, or owed our title to Glory, to our own performances, whereas we are taught by the Oracles of God, that *by grace we are saved, that God only hath made the difference betwixt us and others, and that he hath freely chosen us in his Son Christ Jesus,* Ephes. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 4. 7.

And

And alas ! where are we, or what is all we do, that it can pretend to the lowest degree of Gods acceptance, without he freely, both help us in it, and accept of us for it? so that when he rewards us for our services with Eternal Life, he freely crowns his own free gifts to us. For when we consider how great a disproportion there is betwixt our best Services and Eternal Glory, when we also remember how all our good actions flow from the Principles of Divine Grace freely given, but withal, reflect on the great defects and imperfections that hang about our best performances, we will not be able to entertain any thoughts of our meriting ought at the hands of God. And certainly, the deeper impressions we have either of the evil of sin, or the goodness of God; we will be further from a capacity of swelling big in our own thoughts, or of claiming any thing on the pretensions of justice or debt. It is true, this Doctrine of *Merit* is so explained by some of that Church, that there remains no ground of quarrelling it; except

for the Terms sake, which is indeed odious and improper (though early used by the Ancients in an innocent sense.) But many of that Church acknowledge there can be no obligation on God by our Works, but that which his own promise binds upon him; which none, who believe the truth of the promises of the Gospel, can question; but still we must remember that we owe all to the love of Jesus, and nothing to our selves: which as it is the matter of the *Allelujahs* of glorified Saints, so should be the subject of our daily acknowledgements; wherefore, we must abominate everything that may seem to detract from this. But alas! were all this zeal, many of that Communion own for Merits and good Works, meant for the advancing a Holy and Spiritual Life, it would carry a good apology with it, and its noble design would very much qualify the severity of its censure; but when these good works, which for so many ages were highly magnified, were the building of Churches, the enriching of Abbeys,



beys, Pilgrimages, and other trifling and voluntary pieces of Will-worship, advanced for the Secular interests of the Church; what shall be said of all that pains was used by the Monks for advancing them; but that they were willing to sell the value of the Blood and Merits of Christ, for advancing their own Secular interests, and diviled practices? Alas! how far are these from that Holiness and Sanctity, which must qualify us for the Kingdom of God, and the inheritance of the Saints. And to end this matter, let me add one thing, which is most evident to all who have observed the methods of the directours of Consciences in that Church, that with whatever distinctions this matter be varnished over among them; yet the Vulgar do really imagine they buy and sell with Almighty God, by their undergoing these Laws of the Church, and penances imposed by their Confessour: Which as it nourisheth the life of Pride and Self-love, so it detracts from the value they ought to set on the blood of Christ, as their only title to Heaven and Glory.

And to this, I must add that distinction of the *temporary and eternal punishments* sin deserves : The latter whereof they acknowledge are removed by the Blood of Christ ; but the former must be expiated by our selves ; either by sufferings in this Life , or those we must endure in *Purgatory* ; unless by the Popes charity we be secured or delivered from them. Now, how contrary this is to the value we are taught to set on the Blood of Christ, all may judge. *Ephes. 2. 15, 16. By Christ peace is made, we are reconciled to God, he presents us to the Father without spot and wrinkle.* And much more of this nature meeting us in Scripture , declares how plenary his satisfaction was ; nothing being left undone by him , for removing the guilt and demerit of sin. And what comfortless Doctrine this is, we may soon apprehend, how it takes away that joy in God, at the approaches of death : Since there is such a hazard of direful miseries following. Now, this was no small part of the mystery, by which

## Iniquity unballed.

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which the World was brought under their dominion; and therefore great pains was taken for rooting the belief of it deep in all mens hearts, many Visions and Apparitions were vouched for its proof, and all the Lives of the Saints, that were written for divers Ages, were full of such fabulous narrations; some Souls were said to be seen standing in burning brimstone to the knees, some to the middle, some to the chin, others swimming in caldrons of melted Metal, and Devils pouring the Metal down their throats, with many such affrighting Stories.

But for all this, the proof from Scripture was only drawn from one wrested place of the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 3. 12, 13, 14, 15. who saith, *That in the day of the Lord, such as built upon the foundation of Christ, superstructures of wood, hay, and stubble, should be saved, because they kept the foundation, yet so as by fire.* But this was only a proverbial form of speech, to express the risque they run to be such, as of one that escapes out of a fire; such proverbial speeches being usual in Scripture, as that  
of

of the Prophet, *Zach. 3. 2.* *Is not this brand plucked out of the fire?* Or of the Apostle, *Jude 23.* *Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* And any considering person will, at first view, see how slender a foundation this was for the superstructure built upon it.

But the way was contrived for preserving Souls from, or rescuing them out of Purgatory, will discover what were the inducements of advancing the belief of it with such zeal, which was thus framed: It is believed by that Church, that beside the Commands that necessarily oblige all Christians, there are many Counsels in the Gospel, in order to the attaining a higher pitch of perfection, such as the counsels of poverty, and chastity, &c. the like; and they teach, that such as do not obey these, cannot be said to have sinned; but on the other hand, those who have obeyed them, shall not want a reward, by their so *supererogating* beyond what was strictly bound upon them, and the reward of them is their meriting both for themselves and others, an exemption

ption from the pains of Purgatory! And of all these Merits, there is a *common treasure of the Church*, wherein for good manners sake the Merit of Christ is the chief Stock; and this is committed to the Successors of *St. Peter*, to whom the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are believed to be given, who can communicate of that spiritual Treasure as they will, either for preserving Souls from Purgatory, or for delivering them out of it. This could not but work wonders for the exaltation of the Papal Dignity, when he was conceited to be honoured of God with so high a trust. This was also made an engine for advancing all the Papal Designs, for upon any quarrel he had with any Prince, the Popes proclaimed a *Croisade*, promising exemption from Purgatory to all who hazarded their Lives for the Service of the holy Church. And the contrivance of Purgatory being universally believed, this could not fail to draw great numbers about his Standards. And by this means he brought most Princes into that servile subjection to him, under which

which they groaned for many Ages. Another practice yet more base and sordid was, the selling of Indulgences and Pardons for money; certainly here was *Simon's crime* committed by the pretended Successors of him, who had of old accused him, *that thought the gift of God might be purchased with money*, and thereupon did cast him out of the Church. It were endless to tell the base Arts, and blasphemous Discourses of the Monks who were sent through the World to sell these Indulgences, which in the end proved fatal to that Church, since the excessive magnifying of them did first provoke *Luther* to examine their corruptions. It is true, they will not hear of the harsh word of *selling Indulgences*, but disguise it with their giving them to such as will offer Alms to the Church; but really, this whole contrivance is so base, so carnal, and so unlike the Spirit of Christianity, that to repeat it, is to refute it. Here was a brave device for enriching the Church, when the making great Donations to it, was judged so effectual for

deli-



And delivering out of Purgatory. Who would not out of love to his Friends Soul, and if he believed him frying in these flames, give liberally of his Goods; but much rather would a man give all that he had for his own security, especially when on his death-bed he were beset with persons who were confounding him with dismal apprehensions, and thus trafficking with him *for the exchange of the Soul*. Hence sprung the enriching of Abbeyes and Churches, for every Religious Order hath its own peculiar Merits, which they can communicate to one of their Fraternity: If then a dying man had gained their favour so much, that he was received into their Order, and died wrapped in one of their Frocks, then was his Soul secure from the *grim Tormentors* below. And what an endless heap of Fables had they, of Souls being on the brink, or in the midst of the flames, and of a sudden snatched out.

But now all this Trade hath quite failed them, therefore Indulgences are fallen from their Rates, and in stead of them, there

there are Prayers to be used, and especially to be said before *priviledged Altars*, or at such times, or before such Reliques, that it is no hard work for any among them to ransom the Souls of others, or to preserve their own. In a word, doth not all this debase the Spirit of true Religion, and expose it to the jealousy of Atheists, as if it were a contrivance for advancing base, and secular Designs. And doth it not eat out the sense of true Piety when the Vulgar see the Guides of Souls making such shameful Merchandise of them, and doing it with such respect of persons, that if a man be rich enough, he is secure; *whereby our Lords blessing of the poor and passing a woe on the rich, is reversed.* But above all, what indignity is by this done to the Blood of the Son of God. And how are the People carried from their dependance on Him, and the value of His Sufferings, by these Practices!

Another Art not very remote from this, for detracting from the value of Christs death, and the confidence we should

should have in it, is, the Priestly Absolution, wherein after the Sinner hath gone over his sins without any sign of remorse, and told them to the Priest, he enjoins a penance, the doing whereof, is called a *satisfaction*; and the Vulgar do really imagine, that the undergoing the penance, doth fully serve for appeasing Gods wrath against sin; but as soon as the Priest hath enjoined his penance, without waiting that they obey it, he lays his hand on their head, and says, *I absolve thee*; and after this, they judge themselves fully cleansed of sin, and that they may receive the Sacrament, had their former life been never so bad. It is true, the practice of the Priests in their slight penances, and hasted absolutions, and promiscuous allowing of all the holy Sacrament, is condemned by many in that Church, who complain of these Abuses with much honest zeal; but these complaints are so little regarded, that their Writings are condemned, and the Corruption continues unreformed. Now what can take off more from the value of  
the

the Death of Christ, than to believe it is the power of a Priest to absolve from sin. All the power of the Church being either Ministerially to declare the absolution offered in the Gospel, upon the conditions in it, or to absolve from the scandal which any publick trespass hath given. It was counted blasphemy in Christ, when he said, *Thy sins are forgiven thee, Mar. 2.5, 10.* of which he cleared himself, *from the power was committed to the Son of Man on earth, to forgive sins;* which shews it to be blasphemy in all others to pretend to absolve from sin, it being an invasion of his Prerogative.

To this I might add the scorn put on Religion by many of the penances enjoined for sin, such as the abstaining from flesh for so many days, the pattering over so many Prayers, the repeating the *penitential Psalms*, the going to such Churches, and such Altars, with other ridiculous Observances like these, which cannot but kill the Vitals of true Religion, and lead away Souls from these earnest Applications to Jesus Christ for pardon

pardon and renovation. And who can  
 have any sad apprehensions of sin, who is  
 taught such an easie way of escaping  
 punishment. I confess in this, as in all other parts of  
 Religion, the Masters of that Church  
 have so contrived things, that their Do-  
 ctrines might, according to the fable of the  
 Manna, taste pleasant in every mans relish;  
 for if any be grave and melancholy, then  
 silence, solitude, and retirement are en-  
 joynd them; if their tempers be more  
 fiery and sullen, severe corporal mortifi-  
 cations and disciplines are tasked on  
 them, such as cruel and perhaps publick  
 whipping, or other unspeakable auste-  
 rities, with which the Lives of the mo-  
 dern Saints are full; but if one be of a  
 more jolly temper, who desires Heaven at  
 an easie rate, then some trifling penance  
 shall serve turn. These are a few of their  
 Arts for diverting Souls from flying unto  
 Jesus, as to the sure and safe refuge from  
 the Fathers wrath, in whom only we  
 can find sanctuary, and whom the Father  
 hath sent into the World to seek and save  
 E lost

lost Sinners. A Now whether the Priests in the injunction of easie penances, and giving absolution, do not violate the Prerogative of Jesus, and insensibly debauch Souls from that affectionate and grateful Duty they owe their Redeemer into their trifling methods and appointments, I refer it to all who know them.

— Another opposition made to the Priestly Office of Christ is, their conceit of the sacrifice of the Mass, which they believe is a formal expiation of sins, both for the living, and dead, who are in Purgatory: Christ once offered himself up for taking away sin, which he did by that one Sacrifice, and this is by the apostle stated amongst the differences which are betwixt the sacrifices of Moses, which were to be daily and yearly renewed and repeated, whereas Christ offered one Sacrifice in the end of the world, so that there was no need of more, Heb. 10. 1, 2, 3, 12, 14. Now, to imagine that the Priests going through the Office of the Mass, and receiving the consecrated Elements, can have a virtue to expiate the sins of others



others, especially of the dead, is a thing so contrary to the most common impressions, that it will puzzle a mans belief to think any can credit it. And yet this is one of the Master-pieces of the Religion of that Church. It is true, in a right sense, that Sacrament may be called a Sacrifice, as it was by the Ancients, either in general, as Prayers, Praises, and Alms-deeds are called so in Scripture; or as it is a Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ; but to imagine the Action hath an expiatory force in it, is a visible derogation from the value of Christs Death; and all the value is in any outward Sacramental Action, can only be derived into the Soul of the Receiver, but it is absurd to think one mans action can be derived to another; and it clearly appears from the institution of the Lords Supper, that its end was the joint communicating of Believers, which is perverted manifestly by the practice of these Priests, who communicate in name of the Spectatours.

Finally, what a derogation is it from

the Priestly Office of Christ, one branch whereof is his Intercession, to join Saints or Angels with him in that work, nay, and prefer them to him? Which will be found too true, if the Office of the Virgin, and the Prayers offered to her, be compared with those offered to her Son. Did Christ by the Merits of his Passion acquire this honour at so dear a rate? and shall we for whom he suffered, rob him so injuriously and sacrilegiously of his honour, and bestow it on these who are our fellow-servants?

But having touched this in the former part of my Discourse, I advance my Enquiry to the opposition given the Regal Office of Christ: And first, how contrary is it to the glory wherewith even his humane Nature and Body is refulgent in Heaven, to believe, that *five words*, muttered out by the Priest, shall have the virtue to produce his real and glorified Body, instead of the annihilated Elements of Bread and Wine, and yet under their accidents and appearances? This is a new and strange kind of humiliation, if true,

by which he who is now cloathed with Glory, must be every day exposed under so thick, so dark, and so contemptible a covering, as are the resemblances of Bread and Wine. What low thoughts of his Person must it breed in such minds as are capable of believing this contrivance?

Again, he, as King of his Church, hath given her Laws and Precepts, to whose obedience she is obliged, to which none can add, without they acknowledge another Head, and whose obligation none can untye or dispense with; for Christs dominion consists in this authority he hath over our Consciences; which he hath vindicated into liberty, by delivering us from the bondage of corruption. If then any pretend a power of obtruding new articles on our Belief, or obligations on our Consciences, these must be confessed to be injurious to the Dignity wherewith Christ is vested. What shall then be said of him, who pretends an authority of dispensing with, and dissolving the obligation of Oaths, of

dissolving the Wedlock-bond, of allow-  
 ing Marriage in the forbidden degrees.  
 And as for their additions to the Laws of  
 Christ, they are innumerable. And here  
 what I mentioned last, calls me to mind  
 of a pretty device, to multiply the for-  
 bidden degrees of Marriage, yea, and add  
 the degrees of spiritual Kindred, that is  
 of kindred with our God-fathers or God-  
 mothers in Baptism, which is done upon  
 no other design, but to draw in more  
 to the Treasure of the Church, by fre-  
 quent Dispenses. If I should here reckon  
 up all the additions which by the Au-  
 thority of that Church are made to the  
 Laws of Christ, I should resume all that  
 I have hitherto alledged, they being visi-  
 ble additions to the Doctrine and Rules  
 of the Gospel, and imposed with such  
 unmerciful cruelty, that an *Anathema* is  
 the mildest of the spiritual Censures they  
 thunder against such as comply not with  
 their tyranny, and a faggot would be  
 its civil Sanction, were the secular Pow-  
 ers at their devotion. I do not deny but  
 there is an Authority, both in the Civil  
 and

and Ecclesiastick Powers, of enjoyning things indifferent, but no Authority beside Christs can reach the Conscience; Besides, if these indifferent things swell so in their number, be vain, pompous, and useles, and be imposed without all regard to the tender scruples of weak Consciences, they become tyrannical; and such as do so impose them, discover their affecting a tyrannical and lordly dominion over Consciences, and that they prefer their own Devices to the simpler Methods of Christ, and the plainer and easier Rules of his Gospel.

But one instance of their abrogating the Laws of Christ is more signal, in their violating the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; wherein, though he instituted it under both kinds, and did so distribute it, with the expresse command that all should drink of it, yet they presumed, notwithstanding of that, and though the Primitive Church distributed it in both kinds, which is confessed in their Canon, to snatch the Cup from the Laity, and engross it to the Clergy. Now it is to

be considered, that the value of the Sacramental Actions flowing only from their Institution, the first Appointment should be most religiously observed in them: Besides, the universal extent of Christs word, *drink ye all of it*, which was not used in the distribution of the Bread, hath a particular mystery in it, to guard against the foreseen corruption of that part of it; and the reason given in the distribution of the Cup, shews, it must reach to all that need the Blood of Christ *for the remission of sins*; which not being restrained to the Priests, shews, that the Cup, without a direct opposition to the Mind and Command of Christ, ought not to be taken from the People, and any that will read the goodly reasons given for this Sacrilege, wil see what a low account they have of the Commands of Christ, when, upon such trifling pretences they will violate them. And with how much cruelty they backed this invasion of Christs Authority, the History will declare, they beginning it with a perfidious burning



burning of two witnesses who opposed it at *Constance*: And occasioning so much War and Blood-shed against those who adhered to the rule of the Gospel, in this matter, and refused to stoop to their Tyranny.

But I advance to another invasion of Christs regal authority, committed by him who pretends to be the *Universal Bishop* of the Church, and to have authority over all Church-men; whom he makes swear obedience to him, and looks on them but as his Delegates: It was unluckily done of *Gregory the great*, to be so severe on this head, as to condemn the title of *Universal Bishop*, as *Antichristian*. But little dream'd he in how few years his Successour would aspire to that height of ambition. Now by this pretence, all these Officers whom Christ hath appointed to Rule and Feed his Church, are turned out of their authority, and made subject to him: And with how much pride he treads on his Fellow-Bishops, the Histories of many ages do declare. It is true, at first, as being Bishop of the Imperial

rial City, the Bishops of Rome were highly esteemed, but Pride and Ambition, began soon to leave them; yet they were for the first four ages, looked upon, by the other Bishops, but as their Fellow-Bishops, and by the Decrees of two General Councils, the Bishops of Constantinople were in all things, except the precedency, make equal to them. And by the Decree of the Council of Nice, other Metropolitans are levelled with them. And here I must tell of a shameful forgery of three Bishops of Rome, who one after another, would have obtruded on the African Churches, a Decree, allowing of appeals from them, to the Roman See, as if it had been made at Nice; which they of Africk rejected, and upon tryal, found it to be none of the appointments at Nice, but a Decree of the Council of Sardice.

But by degrees the Bishops of that City got up to the height they are now at, and not content with their usurping over their Brethren and Fellow-Church-men, their next attempt was upon Princes, who deriving their

autho-

authority from *Jesus Christ the King of Kings*, by whom Kings do reign; it was an invasion of his power to attempt against his Vice-Gerents on Earth. But the Popes made no bones of this, for being now held *Christs Vicars on earth*, with other blasphemous titles, as *Vice-God*, yea, and *Lord God*, they thought their power was limited, as long as Kings and Emperours were not even in temporals subject to them. And therefore from the days of *Pope Gregory the 7<sup>th</sup>*, they pretended to a power of deposing Princes, disposing of their Dominions to others, and dispensing with the Oaths of fidelity their Subjects had sworn to them, and it was easie for them to make Crowns change their Masters, as they pleased. For there were always other ambitious Princes ready for their own ends to invade the Dominions of these deposed Kings, upon the Popes warrant, and the generality of the People were so possessed with the Popes power of releasing souls from Purgatory, and from the punishments due to sin, that they were easily prevailed

vailed upon to follow his thunders  
 And by that time the Popes had swarms  
 of Emissaries of the begging Orders,  
 who under shews of austere Piety, ga-  
 ned much reverence and esteem in the  
 World; and so got all subjected to the  
 Papal Tyranny. Now, should I instance  
 this in particulars, I should transgress the  
 limits of a short Discourse, by a long  
 History; but the lives of *Gregory the 7<sup>th</sup>*  
*Alexander the third*, *Boniface the 8<sup>th</sup>*  
 and *Jalius the second*; to mention no  
 more, will sufficiently convince any who  
 will be at the pains to read them, as they  
 are written by these who lived in that  
 Communion. And *Matthew of Paris* will  
 at length inform his Reader, how much,  
 and how often *England* smarted under  
 this Tyranny.

And all this is so far from being deni-  
 ed, that it is defended avowedly by not  
 a few of the *Canonists* and *Jesuits*, and is  
 a Doctrine dearly entertained in the  
 Court of *Rome* to this day, as appea-  
 red from the late attempt of Pope *Paul*  
 the fifth, upon *Venice*: But the World is

now a little wiser, than to be carried away by these Arts, and therefore that pretence is laid to sleep, till haply the beast be healed of the wound was given it at the *Reformation*.

But I cannot leave this particular, without my sad regrades, that too deep a tincture of this spirit of Antichristianism is among many, who pretend much aversion to it; since the Doctrine of resisting Magistrates, upon colours of Religion, is so stiffly maintained, and adhered to, by many, who pretend to be highly reformed, though this be one of the Characters of the *scarlet-coloured whore*. But thus far have we gone through the second part of Antichrists Character, and have discovered too clear indications of a difformity to the spirit and truth of the Christian Religion, in all the branches of the Honour and Worship due to Jesus *the only Mediator of the new Covenant*.

From this I proceed to the third part of my enquiry; which is, the opposition made to the great design of Christi-

an Religion, for elevating the souls of men into a participation of the divine Nature, whereby the soul being inwardly purified, and the outward conversation regulated, the World may be restored to its *Primitive innocence*: And men admitted to an inward and intimate fellowship with their Maker. The first step of this renovation, is *repentance* for God commands men every where to *repent*, and repentance and remission of sins are alwayes united: And this being attended with a deep sorrow at sin upon the sense of its native deformity, and contrariety to the Law of God, which makes the soul apprehend the hazard it hath incurred by it; so, as to study by all means possible to avoid it in all time coming, nothing doth prepare the mind more for faith in Christ, and the study of a new life, than repentance; which must needs be previous to these. But when devices are found to enervate this, sins must be divided into *venial* and *mortal*; the former deserving only some temporal punishment, and being easily expiated by some trifling piece of seem-

ing Devotion, and hereby many sins  
are struck out of the Penitents confide-  
ration: For who can have a great ap-  
prehension of that which is so slightly  
expiated. And this may be extended to  
the easie Pardons, given for acknow-  
ledged mortal Sins: For he who thinks  
that God can be appeased for them, with  
the saying by rote, so many Prayers, can-  
not possibly have deep apprehensions of  
their being either so displeasing to God,  
or so odious in themselves. But shall I to  
this add their asserting, that a *simple attri-  
tion, which is a sorrow flowing from the con-  
sideration of any temporal evil, God hath  
brought upon the sinner, without any regard  
had either to the vileness of the sin, or the  
offence done to God by it; that this (I say)  
can suffice for justifying sinners, and  
qualifying them for the Sacrament,  
whereby the necessity of contrition and  
sorrow flowing from the principle of the  
love of God, is made only a high degree  
of perfection, but not indispensibly ne-  
cessary*: In the next place, all these severi-  
ties they enjoin for Penances, do but tend  
to



to nourish the life of sin, when sinners see a trade set up by which they can buy themselves off from the wrath of God. To this, is to be added the Doctrine of Indulgences, which is so direct an opposition to Evangelical repentance, as if it had been contrived for dispossessing the World of the sense of it.

That which is next pressed in the Gospel for uniting the souls of mankind to God, is *that noble ternary of Graces, Faith, Hope, and Love, by which the soul rests in God by a holy affiance in him, believing the truth of his Gospel, expecting the accomplishment of his Promises, waiting for the full fruition of him, and delighting in his glorious perfections, and excellencies.* Now how much all this is shaken by these carnal and gross conceptions, the Roman Doctrine offers of God in their Image and Mass-worship, and by their Idolatry to Saints is apparent. Are they not taught to confide more in the *Virgin, or their Tutelar Saints,* than in the holiest of all? Doth not the fear of Purgatory damp the hopes

of future blessedness? And finally, what impious Doctrine hath been publickly licensed and printed in that Church of the degrees of the love we owe to God? Some blasphemously teaching, *that we are not at all bound to love him*, others mincing it so, *as if they were afraid of his being too much beloved*. In a word, there is an impiety in the Morals of some of that Church, particularly among the *Disciples of Loyola*, beyond what was ever taught amongst the worst of the Heathen Philosophers, which hath been fully discovered by some of the honefter and more zealous of that communion. And though these corruptions have not been avowed by the head of that Church, yet by their being publickly vented, by the deaf ear he gives to all the complaints against them, and by the constant carelles and priviledges he heaps upon that Order which teacheth them, he discovers either his great satisfaction in that corrupt Doctrine, or that upon the account of other interests, he is content to betray the souls of Christians into

F is to vouch the

the corruption of such impious and godly leaders, since the Order that has owned all these corruptions is yet possessed of the Consciences of the greater part of them that own that Communion they being the universal Confessors. And since they license the publick vending of so much corrupt Doctrine printed Writings, what reason have we to suspect their base compliance with sins in their more secret and unknown Practisings, with such poor deluded souls as trust to their conduct; of which many proofs are brought by others of the same Church?

But I pursue my enquiry into the traces of the Antichristian corruption of the purity, and power, of our holy Faith: Solemn Worship, and fervent Devotion, are the great means of uniting souls to God, and of deriving the assistance of his Spirit and Grace to us, when these are performed in an unknown tongue. How incapable are they of achieving that end? And the Doctrine of efficacy of the Sacraments, for com

ing of grace by the work wrought, looks like a design against all serious preparation for the worthy receiving of them; since by that doctrine, a man, be he never so ill prepared, yet is sure of their efficacy; for if his Priest absolve him, and he have a simple attrition for sin, without any thing of the love of God, he is by their Doctrine and Conduct qualified for receiving worthily; were his heart never so much united to sin, or averse from all Devotion, or application to Divine matters. And what complaints shall be here made of these who teach, that the sure way of gaining the favour of God, which they phrase by the keys of Paradise, is to say the Ave, to bid the blessed Virgin good-morrow every day, or to send our Angel Guardian to salute her? or finally, to wear a Meddal or Rosary in devotion to her, though from the first time we begin to wear it, we never again think of her; Doth not all this look like a conspiracy against the power of Godliness?

But shall we next consider the Moral Law, which though Christ said, he

*came not to dissolve, but to fulfil, Mat*

5. 17. Yet they have found out distinctions and Doctrines to destroy it. It

true, what may be said here, cannot directly, as to every particular, be charged

on the Roman Church, since, it hath not been decreed by Pope, or Council;

when prophane *Casuits* have printed Doctrines, which tend to the subver-

sion of the most common principles of virtue, and morality, and these are licen-

sed according to the rule of that Church. And for as publick as they are, and for

as the censures and complaints others have passed upon them, yet they continue

without any censure from the chair of *Rome*, it is a shrewd presumption that they

are not unwelcome to that See: Though for good manners sake they have given

them no other owning, but a connivance joyned with an extraordinary cherishing

of that School which vents them.

Two general Doctrines they have which at two stroaks dissolve all the

bonds of Virtue. The one is, *Doctrine of probability*; the other,

good intention. By the first, they teach, that if any approved Doctor of the Church have held an opinion about any practical thing, as probable any Christian may with a safe conscience follow it, were it never so much condemned by others; and did it appear with the blackest visage: And by this it is, that scarce there is a sin which may not be safely hazarded on, since there have been of the approved Doctors of that Church, who have made a shift by distinctions, to represent the worst actions, not only probable, but as really good. The next Doctrine is, of good intention, *whereby they teach a man to commit the grossest Legerdemain with God and his own conscience imaginable; by which he may act any sin he will, provided he intend not that, but some other good design or motive*: And any that will read the *Provincial Letters*, or the *Mystery of Jesuitism*, and compare their Citations with the Authors, whence they take them, will soon be satisfied of the truth of this.

We have already seen how that

Church violates the two first Commandments, by her Idolatry: Whereby in opposition to the first, she worships Saints and Angels, with those acts and expressions of adoration only due to God. The second is also palpably violated by their Image-worship, and adoring God under sensible and external representations. The third is made void by the Popes pretending to dispence with Oaths, and to annul their obligation, as also by their Doctrines of *equivocation and mental reservations*, in all Oaths, both assertory, and promissory, besides the impious Doctrines of some Casuists, that justify the *prophaning of Gods Sacred Name*, in *rash and common swearing*. Their contempt of the fourth Precept is not denied, it being usually among them a day of *mercating, dancing, and foolish jollity*. Many among them teaching, that to hear Mass that day, doth fully answer the obligation for its observance. Their contempt of the fifth follows, upon the Doctrine of the Popes power, of *deposing Princes*, and freeing the Sub-  
jects



jects from their obligation to them; by which they are taught to rebel, and resist the Ordinance of God. Besides, their Casuists allow it as lawful to desire the Parents death, provided it be not out of malice to him, but out of a desire of good to themselves: that they may enjoy their inheritance, or be rid of their trouble. Yea, some of their impious Casuists say, that Children may lawfully intend the killing of their Parents, and may disown them, and Marry without their consent.

For the sixth Command, their Casuists do generally allow, to kill in defence of Honour, Life, or Goods, even though the hazard of losing them be not near and evident, but afar off, and uncertain: And they teach, that a man is not bound to stay till another smite him; but if he threaten him, or if he offend with his words, or if one know that he hath a design upon his Honour, Life, or Goods, he may with a good Conscience prevent, and kill him. And this they extend to all sorts of persons, both Secular and Religious; allowing it to Sons against their

their Fathers. And they leave it free to them to execute this by whatever means they judge most proper, whether by force, or surprize, or by the service of others, if they dare not attempt to kill by their own hands; which they stretch to the case of one who knows another guilty of a crime, and intends to pursue him for it; and they allow the guilty person, if he know no other way of escape, to kill him who intends his accusation, that he may thereby preserve his life; in order to which they also allow it lawful to kill the witnesses that may prove the crime.

As for the *seventh Command*, modesty cannot name their polluted Doctrines about it: They barred the Clergy the lawful use of Marriage, but did allow them Concubinate, and *the publick licenses given to base houses in the Popes dominions*, prove that *See a Mother of Fornications*, even in the letter, the Religious Houses being likewise full of Irreligious intanglements, into a course of life, which many times they are not able to bear; but being restrained from the honou-

able Ordinance of God, many of these houses have proved either nests of filthiness or of secret impurities; which it seems by the rules of confession, and the questions their Confessours puts to them, are known to abound among them. And any that have read these, will confess, that it defiles a chaste mind to read them; but what must it be to ask them, especially at those of a different Sex? Shall I also here mention the frequent dispensing with Marriages within degrees forbidden, and their as frequent dissolving of that sacred knot, though (*as if they had resolved on a contradiction to all the rules of the Gospel*) they refuse to dissolve the bond on the account of adultery, which Christ hath made the only ground than can justify the dissolution of it? But shall I add to this, the base impieties, of which not only these of purple and scarlet Livery among them have been notoriously guilty, but even the villanies of some that have worn the Triple Crown? As I should grow too tedious, so I must needs tell things, which to a pure mind were both

both

both nauseating to write and to read. Those that have been in that Spiritual Babylon, know, that is a Sodom, even in the letter, none being more guilty of that crying Wickedness, than those that bear the character of religious or sacred Orders. And what shall we think of the Scarlet Fraternity, that produced a Monster that attempted Heaven it self, by writing in defence of that impiety, which it avenged by Fire and Brimstone, and yet had no Censure passed on him for it? Whereas for the least tincture of Calvinism or Lutheranism, he had been condemned to the Fagot. Some of them do also teach, that Fornication is not forbidden by the Laws of Nature, and only by positive Precepts, so that it may be dispensed with.

For the *eighth Command*, those profane Casuists have made such shifts for it, that none needs to be guilty of Theft; for they teach it to be no sin to take that from another which he made no use of, but may well want, and that in such a case, he who steals, is not obliged to restitution: Others

of them teach, That he who stole a great sum, is not obliged to the restitution of the whole, but only of so much as may make the theft not notable: But they teach, that small thefts, even though often repeated, are but Venial sins, which is an excellent Doctrine for warranting Servants insensibly to purloin their Masters goods. They also teach Arts of escaping just Debts, beyond all the subtilties of false Lawyers; which the Jesuites themselves have often put in practice, and have found out Arts for justifying oppressive Usury, defrauding of Creditors, ruining of Commerce, and making havock of our Neighbours goods, without Injustice.

For the *ninth Command*, though it be so contrary to Nature, that the worst of men count it a reproach to be charged with Falshood, and Lying; yet they have favoured it avowedly: For by their Doctrines of Equivocating and using Mental reservations, the greatest Falsities in the World may be averred and sworn without sin: And the value they set on a strict observance of promises, and candor

dor in them, appeared at *Constance*, where a whole Council required *Sigismund* the Emperor, to burn *John Huss*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*, though he had given them his safe Conduct; for they taught him, *that faith was not to be kept to Hereticks*. Another such like trip of one of the Popes, proved fatal both to *Ladislaus*, and the Kingdom of *Hungary*, at *Varna*; where they breaking the Truce they had sworn to the Turk, upon the Popes warrant, were signally punished for their treachery. The Doctors of the fore-mentioned School do also teach, that he who hath born false witness in a matter that may cost another his life, is not bound to retract it, if that retraction may bring great evils upon him. They also propole methods for suborning Witnesses, and falsifying of Writs and Records, without any sin; and that all this may be done to defame a person with some horrid imputation, who is led as a Witness to prove any thing against one, that thereby he may be cast from witnessing.

And as for the *tenth Command*, they have

have struck out all the first motions of the mind to Evil, from being accounted Sins; and by their division of Sins into Venial, and Mortals, they make sure enough work of this Command, that it shall not be broken mortally. It were an endless work to go and make out all these particulars, of their dissolving the Moral Law by clear proofs: but he who desires satisfaction in that, will find it in the *Provincial Letters*, or the *Morals of the Jesuits*.

But if we pass from the Law, to the Gospel, we shall find they have made no less bones of it. We are all over the Gospel called to be heavenly minded, to despise the World, and to set our affections on things above; and particularly, Church-men are taught not to seek the riches, splendor and vanities of a present World; which was most vigorously enforced by the example of Christ and his holy Apostles. But how contrary to this is that Religion, whose great design is, the enriching and aggrandizing of the Teachers and Pastours of it,  
chiefly



chiefly of him who pretends to be the supreme and sole Pastor? I need not here remind the Reader, of the Trade of Indulgences, by which that Church rose to its riches and pomp; nor need I tell what a value they set on outward actions of piety, the chief of these being the enriching of Churches, and Abbies; and how these were commended to the World as the sure means of attaining Eternal life. Shall I add to this, the visible and gross iecularity and grandeur, in which the Head, and other Prelates of that Church do live? The Head of it being in all things a temporal Prince, perpetually busied in intrigues of State, and ballancing the *Princes of Europe*, and chiefly of *Italy*; and what base and *Simoniack* practices abound in that Court, all who have written of it with any degrees of ingenuity, do acknowledge, all things are venal there: Money being able to raise the basest and unworthiest to the highest promotions; the *Cardinals* are also named either upon the Interests of Princes, and chiefly of the two great Crowns

Crowns ; or to make the *Popes Nephews* have a greater stroke in the next *Conclave* ; or upon some such carnal account. And perhaps, for good manners sake, a Scholar, or a person famous for Devotion, may get a red Hat, but such are alwayes the least esteemed in the Colledge ; all affairs being governed by the *Popes Nephews*, or the *Protectors of the Crowns*. And who shall expect that such a company of secular, ignorant, ( I mean in matters of Religion ; ) and oftentimes licentious men, should be the great *Sanhedrim*, by whose advice all that belongs to Religion must be managed : These must be likewise the Electors of the *Pope*, when the See is vacant ; whom they choose out of their own number, who is always elected by the prevailing Interests of one of the Crowns, or by the Faction of the former *Popes Nephews*. And what Caballings, what bespeaking of Suffrages, and what impudent *ambitus* is commonly practised in the Elections of *Popes*, is well enough known, nor can it be denied : Now, what man of common

common sense can imagine, that a Pope thus elected by Simoniacal Arts, and carnal Interests, can be *Christs Vicar on Earth*, or have the Holy Ghost always affixed to his Chair, that he shall never erre in any of his Decrees? Truly, he that can believe this, may believe any thing that is gross and absurd. Is not the whole frame and contrivance of that Court turned entirely Secular, that not a vestige of the Character of a Church, or of Churchmen, remains? And to this, shall I add all the splendor of their Apparel, the state of their Processions, and the ceremonies of their Coronation, and how they wear a Triple Crown? which being so well known to all whoever were at Rome, need not be descanted on by me. But the mention of the Crown calls me to mind of the literal accomplishment of that, of *Mystery, being on the forehead of the whore*; since the word *Mystery*, was for a great while the inscription on the front of their Triple Crown, though it be now altered; which being proved by others, I may not stay to make

it good. From this I should descend to the Cardinals, Bishops, and Abbots, and shew how secular they are become; all their design being to engross the power, and monopolize all riches: which contagion is also derived into the inferior Orders of the Clergy, who by the magnifying of their Images, Saints, and Reliques, use all the Arts they can devise for enriching of themselves and their friends. And even these Orders that pretend to mortification, and abandoning the world, and talk of nothing but their poor and austere manner of life, yet have possessed themselves of no small part of the riches and glory of the world. It is true, there is a young Brotherhood among them, which though the youngest yet hath outstripp'd the elder, and made them stoop to it, and serve it. And what base and sordid ways that society hath pursued, for arriving at the highest pitch of greatness, and riches, and how successfully they have managed their designs, is sufficiently cleared, what through the zeal of some of the honestest of that

Communion, what through the envy of other emulating orders, all these things do fully prove how unlike that Church is to the poor, and pure simplicity of Christ and his Apostles, and of the first ages of the Church?

If we further examine the character of Evangelical purity, we have them from the mouth of our *Saviour*, when he commands us to learn of him, *for he was meek and lowly in heart*: and he made it the distinguishing badg of his disciples, that *they loved one another*. Now for humility, it is true, the Head of that Church calls himself *the servant of the servants of God*; but how far such humility is from his design, his aspiring pretences do loudly declare. All the world must stoop to him; not only must his fellow-Bishops swear obedience to him, and become his Vassals, but the Kings of the earth must be his footstool, and all must pay him that servile homage of kissing his foot; an ambition as insolent as extravagant. His power must be magnified with the most blasphemous Titles of *his being*

God

God, our Lord God on earth Omnipotent ; with a great deal more of such servile Adulations, offered to him from the Parasites of that Court. In a word, a great part of that Religion, when rightly considered, will be found on design contrived and abetted, for exalting him to the highest degrees of insolence : but so many proofs of this were already upon other occasions hinted, that it is needless to go over them again : and that same leaven, leavens the whole lump of their Clergy ; who all pretend that by their Ecclesiastical character they are only subject to their Head, and so enjoy an immunity from the Civil Authority, be their crimes what they may be. And an in-road on this pretence of late, from the *State of Venice*, when they seized two Churchmen that were highly guilty, drew out so much of their most holy Fathers indignation, that he thundered against them, and finding the weakness of the *spiritual sword*, resolved to try the edge of his *temporal one* upon them, in patrociny, partly of these Villanes, and partly of the covetousness

tousness of the Clergy, to which the Senat had set a small limit, by a decree ; but finding they were like to prove too hard for him, *he was willing to put up his sword, rather then to kill and eat, as one of his Cardinals advised him.*

Shall I with this also tell the instances of the ambition of Cardinals, who from their first, original of being Presbyters of Rome, have risen up to the height of counting themselves the companions of Kings, and in their habits affect a Princely splendor, *but have unluckily chosen the Liveries of the Whore ; for they wear Scarlet as the Bishops do Purple, the foretold colours of the Whores Garments.* Shall I next shew to what a height of pride the exaltation of the Priestly dignity among them hath risen? as if it were equal, nay preferable to the condition of Princes. The Priests giving absolution, is a sure device to make his power be much accounted of, since he can forgive sin. The gorgeous and rich apparel they wear in worship, serves also to set off their dignity. And what a goodly device is it, that their



their spittle must make one of the sacred Rites in Baptism? *Certainly that must be esteemed a marvellous holy creature, whose very excrements are so sacred.* Their enhancing the Cup to themselves from the people, was another trick for raising of their esteem: but above all things, their power of transmitting the substance of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, by uttering five words, was a marvellous device, to make all the world admire them, who can so easily, and every day work a miracle, compared to which, all the miracles of the Gospel may pass for ordinary actions. What a great piece of wonder must such a man be held to be, who can thus exercise his authority over the very person of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding of all the glory to which he is now exalted? And it was no contemptible Engine for that same design, to possess the people with a belief of the Priests offering in Mass an expiatory Sacrifice, for the sins both of the dead and living; which proved a Stock for them to trade on, both for their ambition and covetousness, and from

these evidences we may infer, how little of the humility of Christ appears in the Church, from the highest to the lowest.

The next branch of the Evangelical Spirit is, meekness and charity, which leads me unto the consideration of the fourth design of the Christian Religion, which was the uniting of mankind under one head, and into one body, and this it designed to effectuate, not only by these sublime Precepts of the highest love, and the outmost extent of the pardoning of injuries, and of returning them with the best offices of love and prayer; which the blessed Author of our faith did enact; but by the associating of the faithful into one Society, called the *Church*, which was to be united with the closest Bonds of Brotherly love, and Charity; and was to be governed by Pastors and Teachers, who should feed the flock with the sincere milk of the Word; and was also to be cemented together by the Ligaments of the holy Sacraments, by which, as by joynts and bands they are both united to their head, and knit together. Now we are from these things

things to consider what opposition that Church we are now considering, gives to this branch of the end of Christianity.

And first, whereas the Gospel pronounceth us free, and that we are no more the servants of men, but of God, if any attempt upon that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, he changeth the authority of the Church into a tyrannical Yoke; much more, if all the new articles of belief, and rules for practice, be imposed under the severest certificats. But here we are to consider, that all these things which that Church hath imposed on all of her Communion, for which we withdrew from her, are additions to our faith; for in this we mainly differ from that Church, that whatever we acknowledge, they acknowledge likewise, but with a great many additions, we believe the Scriptures are a rule for Christians, and they believe the same; but they add traditions, and the authority of the Church to the Scriptures. We believe that God is to be worshipped spiritually, they believe the same; but add that he may be worshipped by Images and

sensible Figures. We believe Christ to be the Mediator betwixt God and Man, they believe the same; but add to this the intercession of Saints. We hold that God and Christ are to be worshipped, they hold the same, but add Saints and Angels to our worship. We believe Heaven and Hell to be the several States of the future life, they believe the same; but add Purgatory betwixt them, to the day of Judgment. We believe Baptism and the Lords Supper to be the Sacraments of the new Covenant, they believe the same; but add five more. We believe Christ is spiritually and really present in the Lords Supper, this they believe; but add the unconceivable Tenent of his corporal presence. In a word, it might be instanced in many other particulars, how they have driven us from their Communion, by their additions to the truth, and sincerity of the Gospel, which they have adulterated by their Inventions; and not only have they imposed all these things, but thundered out *Anathema's* on all that question them, and have so wreathed all their fopperies, with that

that main and fundamental article of their belief, of the infallibility of their Church, that it is impossible to hope for their recovery, till they renounce that Principle which is so dear to them. For if their Church be infallible, then in no matter of faith or practice can she decree amiss, and therefore the lawfulness and sanctity of all her decrees must be maintained with an equal vigor and zeal; for if in one of them she step aside, her infallibility is for ever gone. And by this we may see to how little purpose it is to treat of accommodating matters with that Church, since there is no possibility of our union with them, without we turn over entirely to them: since they cannot part with one of their errors, without they first renounce that which is the dearest of them all, to wit, the unerring authority of their Church. How cruel then is that Church, which addeth the severe sanction of an Anathema to all her decrees; even about the most trifling matters? and about things that are by their Confession of their own natures indifferent. And a consecratory to this is, that

that cruel opinion they hold, *that none can be saved out of their Communion* : pretending there is no Salvation without the true Church, which they restrict to these who are under the obedience of the Roman Bishop ; and this is what they usually frighten all with.

But it is to be considered what the true notion of the Church is, that so we may see through this frightful Vizar. The Church then is *a Society of Christians united in the same faith, for worshipping of God jointly.* And another definition of a Church cannot be proved from Scripture ; for the Church being called the Body of Christ, its union with him as its head, is held forth by the Apostle in these words, *Col. 2. 19. The head Christ, from whom the whole body by joints and bonds, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* From which words, we see what constitutes a man a member of the true Church ; which is first, his union to Christ as his head, together with a dependence on him for growth and nutriture : and next, his being knit to all others who

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are thus united to Christ; which is first the inward union of divine Charity, by which he loves all who cleave to Christ as their head: and next, his associating himself with them in outward visible acts of worship, which every Christian is bound to do, with all that worship God in Spirit and truth. But if a Society of Christians do visibly swerve from Christ in many great and signal contradictions to the honour due to his Person, and to the obedience due to his Laws, and do grossly adulterate the worship, so that communion cannot be had with that Church, without departing from the head Christ, then it can be no departing from the Church, to adhere to Christ and his true worship, and to separate from the corruptions are brought in upon the Christian religion. If then it appear that the Church of Rome hath departed from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel, in so many great and main points, these who attempted the reforming her to her first purity, and finding that not to be hoped for, did unite among themselves for serving and worship-  
ing



ing God aright, cannot be charged with separation from the true Church.

But by that cruel Tenent of theirs, they breed up all their Children in the greatest uncharitableness imaginable, condemning all who cannot believe all their strange Doctrines, or concur in their unhallowed worship. Thus they are the Schismatiques who have departed from the true Church, and who force from their Communion all who adhere to it: but this cruelty rests not in uncharitable censures, but hath extended it self to as much bloody and barbarous rage, as ever sprung from Hell; for all the cruelty of the heathen Persecuters, cannot match the practices of that Whore, that hath been so often *drunk with the blood of the Saints, and of the Martyrs of Jesus*. What enraged cruelty appeared against the poor *Waldenses*, for the separating from their Corruption? how many of all Sexes and Ages, were cruelly butchered down by the procurement of the Rulers of that Church? and because the *Albigenses* lived under the protection of Princes

Princes that favoured them, how did the Popes depose their Princes, and instigate other ambitious invaders to seize on their dominions: which to effectuate, a *croisade* was proclaimed, that had been formerly practised against the Enemies of the Christian Faith, and heaven was promised to such as went against these poor innocents, whereupon they were killed by thousands, without all mercy. Never was there any who had the zeal or honesty in these dark ages to witness against the apostacy of the Church, but the Pope and Clergy used all means to get his zeal rewarded with a faggot. And when the time of reformation came, with what rage and spite did the Pope by his Letters and Legates instigate all the Princes of Europe to cruelty against them; but as these things were not done in corners, so they are still so fresh in our remembrance, by the copious accounts we have of them, that I need not tell what Arts the Popes and other Ecclesiasticks used, to set all *Germany* on fire upon this account: nor need I tell the

the cruelty was exercised in the Nether-  
Lands, in *Charles* the fifth his time, in  
which more than an hundred thousand  
are said by *Grotius* to have been butcher-  
red on the account of Religion. And in  
his Son *Philips* time, the D. of *Alva*, did in  
a short time cut down 36000. Nor need  
I tell the cruelties were practised in  
*France* for about forty years together,  
nor of that treacherous Massacre where-  
in there was an equal mixture of perfidy  
and cruelty, which for all that was in-  
tertained at *Rome* with great joy and ap-  
plauses. It will be also needless to tell of  
their cruelty in *England* in *Queen Mary's*  
dayes, which was chiefly mannaged by  
the Churchmen. And many are yet alive  
who remember what enraged cruelty  
appeared in our neighbour-Island, a-  
gainst all of our Religion, which did not  
only flow from the fury of an oppressed  
People, but they were trained, encour-  
aged, and waranded to it, by their  
Priests, and the *Nuntio* who came after-  
wards among them, discovered who was  
the spring of all their motions. Shall I

to this add all the private assassinations committed on that account, which were not only practis'd, but justified? I might here congest many instances; Brother murdering Brother, on the account of Religion. Neither is *Element a Dominican his murdering Henry the third, nor Chastlets attempt, nor Ravalliacs fact on Henry the fourth, forgotten.* Q. Elizabeths life, is full of these attempts, and the blackest of them all was, the Gunpowder treason; all which are to be charged on that Church, because the Doctrine of murdering Heretique Princes, was taught, licenced, printed, and yet not condemned in it. From these hints we may guess, how much of the lowly, meek, and charitable Spirit, is to be found with them. But should I to this add the horrid cruelties exercised in these massacres, I should be almost past belief, had I not undeniable Historians for verifying it? but the mildest of them being to be burnt alive, we may guess what the more savage have done by their tortures and lingering Deaths. Next, shall I mention their

their *Courts of Inquisition* which have been among them in the hands of Churchmen, from the dayes of their pretended *Saint Dominick*, whose order have been the great Instruments of the cruelties of that Church, and whose procedure being tyed to no forms of equity, or justice, is as unjust as unmerciful, persons being haled to their black Courts, upon bare suspicions, or secret Informations, without leading of proofs against them, are by Torture examined, not only of their own opinions, but of all that are known to them, whose Testimony though drawn from them by cruel Torture, will bring the same Tortures on all they delate; neither is there any mercy or any whom this Court declares Heretick, but the Civil Magistrate must condemn them to the fire. Now what man that considers the meekness of Christ, and the Evangelical Spirit, can think that Church the Spouse of Christ, that hath rioted it with such savage rage, against thousands of persons, for no other crime, but because they adhered firmly

ve to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and would  
of not consent or concur with these signal  
re- and palpable corruptions with which  
der they have adulterated it.

But as from the constitution of their  
Church, we see their difformity from the  
Gospel-rule; so we will next consider  
their Church-men, and we shall find how  
far they have strayed from the first Ori-  
ginal. Church-men ought to be the  
Guides and Pastours of souls. Now, how  
little of this there is among them, we will  
soon be resolved in? What do the Popes  
about the feeding of souls? when do  
they preach the Gospel? or dispence the  
Sacraments? Alas! it were below the  
height of *his holiness*, to stoop to such  
mean Offices. Does any vestige of a  
Church-man remain in that Court? and  
do they not directly rule in the Spirit of  
the *Lords of the Gentiles*? And in this  
the Cardinals, Bishops, and Abbots, do  
to their proportion imitate their most  
*Holy Father*; abandoning wholly the  
work of the Gospel, as if they bore an  
empty title, or at most, were only bound

to say Mass on some greater holy days, but in all other things do avowedly cast off the care of their flocks. Shall I here tell of the relaxation of all the ancient rules, about the offices and duty of Church-men, which these latter ages have invented, *and mention how children are made Bishops, how they allow of Pluralities, Non-residencies, Unions, Commendams, Gratia expectativa's*, with a great many more corruptions, which are every day authorized and granted at Rome, and so zealous were they for these, that they struggled hard against the honest attempt of some at Trent, *who would have had residence declared of divine right, and got it, though with much ado to be laid aside.* And thus it is that the Bishops and Abbots among them do for most part relinquish their Charges, to live at the Courts of Princes, and insinuate themselves upon all affairs and offices: and swarms of them go to Rome, gaping for preferment there. I deny not but even these late ages have produced great men among them, who seem to have



have designed the reviving of the Ancient Discipline, both among the Clergy, and the People; but as these instances are rare, so they were hated and persecuted at *Rome* for their zeal. Witness the condemning of *Arnolds Book of frequent Communion*, and the severity *Jansenius*, and the *Abbot of S. Cyran*, with their followers, have met with: and thus whatever individuals that Church may have produced, yet the corruptions I have hinted, are notoriously, publicly, and generally practised in it, and no where so avowedly, as at the Court of *Rome*. But to compensate this defect of the Superior Clergy, they have swarms of the inferior ranks, every where, both secular and regular, who seem to mind the care of souls very seriously. But not to reflect again upon any thing hath been hitherto said of their bad conduct of souls, I shall now only take notice of the authority they pretend to, as if the People were bound blindly to follow their Confessors direction, as the voice of God, which clearly makes them the servants of men,

and subjects them to the heaviest yoke, which is most directly contrary to the *liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; and what a rack to souls have they made Confession; and what an Engine to get into the secrets of all the World, and to bring mankind under their subjection, is obvious enough to any that considers it? and to enforce it the more, as they teach it simply necessary to Salvation, so the authority they made the World believe the Priests were vested with for pardoning sin, together with their easie pardons and slight penances, did root it deep in the hearts of all of that Communion.

But I go next to examine the Sacraments, of which so much being said already, little remains to be added. By their dividing the Cup from the Bread, they destroy Christs Institution, and so make it no Sacrament, and the hearing of Mass without communicating, though it make up the greatest part of their worship, yet is purely a service of their own devising, without warrant from Christs Institution, who said, *take, eat, this is my*

Body; thereby shewing, he intended the vertue and benefit of that Ordinance, only for those who received it. And in a word, let any read and compare the Institution of the Lord Supper, as it is in *the three Gospels, and the Epistle to the Corinthians*, together, with the whole office of the Mass, as it is in the Roman Church, and then let him on his Conscience pass his verdict, whether they have adhered to, or departed from, Christs Institution in that piece of their worship. Finally, one great end of all solemn Worship, being the Communion of Saints, in their joint adorations, and mutual occurrence in divine services, what union can they have with God? or what communion can they hold one with another? who perform all their Worship in an unknown Tongue, which is the rule and constant practice of that Church beyond Sea; though for the better venting of their sophisticated stuff among us, they give the people Books of devotion in their vulgar Language, yet continue to say the Office of the Mass in Latine.

And thus far I have run a round that great Circle, I proposed to my self in the beginning of this discourse : and have examined the chief Designs of the Christian Religion, and have found the great and evident contradictions, given to them in all their branches, by the established and authorized Doctrines and practises of that Church ; in which I have fully justified the wise mans observation, that *he who increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*; and have said enough to evince to all rational and considering minds, how unsafe it is for any that would keep a good Conscience, to hold Communion with them. But I have not finished my design, till I likewise examine the Characters of the Christian Religion, and compare them with these are to be found in the Synagogue of Rome.

The first Character of our faith is, that it was delivered to the World by men sent of God, and divinely inspired, who proved their Mission by Miracles. Now these Doctrines about which we differ from that Church can pretend to no such  
divine

divine original, let them tell us what inspired man, did first teach the worship of Images, of the Mass, of Angels, and Saints, and of Reliques : what man sent of God was the first Author of the belief, of the corporal presence, of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of the Popes supremacy, of Purgatory, of Indulgences, and of all these innumerable superstitions, of which the Scripture is absolutely silent : for if these doctrines were not the off-spring of Revelations, they are none of the Oracles of God, nor can we be obliged to believe them as such. It is true, they vouch Scriptures for proof to some of these, but these are so far stretched, that their sure retreat is in the Sanctuary of the Churches Traditions : but till a clear warrant be produced for proving it was impossible that any falshood could have that way crept into the World, we must be excused from believing these. Neither is it possible to know what Traditions came from the Apostles, for as the vulgar are not capable of pursuing the enquiry, so the loss of most of the writings of the first

two Ages, makes it impossible to know what Traditions came from the Apostles.

But this I say not, that we need fear this trial, for the silence of the first and purest Ages, about these things which are controverted among us, is evidence enough, that they were not known to them; especially since in their Apologies which they wrote to the Heathens for their Religion and Worship, wherein they give an abstract of their Doctrines, and a Rubric of their worship; they never once mention these great evils, for which we now accuse that Church. It is true, a late ingenious Writer, whose sincere zeal and candor had much offended the Roman Court, and drawn censures on himself and his Book, took a way to repair his reputation by a new Method of proving the truth of the Opinions held in the Roman Church; which was, that since the present Church held them, that shews that they had them so from their Ancestors, and they from theirs, till you run backwards to the days of the Apostles:

Apostles : alledging that a change in the Worship was unpracticable, since it could not be done in a corner, but in the view of all the World ; who it is not to be imagined were capable of suffering any great or considerable change to be made in that which was daily in their view, and much in their esteem ; therefore he concludes, that every Generation adhered to that belief, in which they were born : and so no change in any great substantial and visible part of worship could be made. It is true, he applies this only to the belief of the corporal presence, which he attempts to prove could never have been introduced into the Church, had it not been conveyed down from the Apostles. He hath indeed set off this with all the beauties of wit, and elegencies of stile, and much profound reading. But with how great and eminent advantages, both of reason, and learning, this pretence hath been baffled ; I leave it to the judgment of all who have been so happy as to read Mr. *Cland* his incomparable Writings? And the common sense of mankind will



will prove this but an imposture, how fairly soever adorned; for if we find it certain that any Doctrines, or main parts of worship are now received into that Church, and if from the undeniable evidences of History, and Writings of Ancients, it appear, that these things were not received in the ancient Church, then it is certain there hath been a change made from what was then, to what is now, though an ingenious Invention may make it appear very difficult, to imagine how and when the change came in; especially when it was insensibly, and by pieces advanced. If then it be proved that the Fathers believed the Elements in the Sacrament were really bread and wine, and not changed from their own nature, but only types and figures of the Body of Christ, then we are sure a change must have been made, though the ignorance of some ages makes it a hard task to clear all particulars about it. It is true, the Fathers did highly magnifie this Sacrament, with many expressions, which (though the vehemence of Divine Rhetorick

torick can well justifie, yet) will not bear a Logical *Examen*, but when they speak in a cooler Stile, nothing can be more clear, then that they believed not the corporal presence. But may not that reasoning of the impossibility of a change in a worship, be as well applied to the taking the Chalice from the People, who in reason should be imagined so tenacious of so great a priviledge, that no consideration should have obliged them to part with it? and yet we know, nor do they deny, how it was wrung from them, about 250 years ago. What may seem less credible then for the People to consent, to have their worship in an unknown Tongue, and yet we know that all once worshipped in their Mother Tongue, but that after (by the overthrow of the Roman Empire) the Latine Tongue decayed, the barbarous worship was obtruded on the World? And what piece of worship is both more visible, and more contrary to the clearest evidence of Scriptures, especially to the commandments, in which the people were alwaies

ways instructed, then the worshipping of Images? And though we know well enough that for the first seven Centuries the Christian World abhorred them, yet within a hundredth years after that, we find a great part of it bewitched with them. And what can be thought more uneasy for the World to have received, then the Popes absolute authority over all the Churches and States of the World? One should think that though Religion and Reason, had lien out of the way, yet Interest, and Ambition, had withstood this: yet we see clearly by what steps they crept up, from being Bishops of the Imperial City, in an equality of power with their neighbouring Bishops, into that culminating hight, to which they have now mounted. In a word, we refuse not to appeal to the first four Ages of the Church, in these matters that we quarrel the Roman Church for; We deny not but humane infirmity begun soon to appear in the Church, and a care to gain on the Heathens, made them quickly fall upon some rites, and use some

some terms, which after-ages corrupted. But the ruin of Religion was, when the Roman Empire being overturned by the incursion of the Northern Nations, in the beginning of the fifth Century, both piety and Religion being laid to sleep, instead of the Primitive simplicity of the faith and worship of the Christians, they turned all their zeal to the adorning of the outwards of Religion, & hence the corruptions of the Church took their rise.

But I had almost forgot to name some Revelations which that Church pretends to, even for some of her most doubtful opinions: which are the visions and extraordinary Inspirations of some of their Saints, from which they vouch a divine confirmation to their Doctrines; I confess there is a great deal of extraordinary Visions, Raptures and Extasies to be met with among the lives of their Saints; and I fear a great deal more than truth: for really whoso will but read these writings, he must confess they are so far from being probable, or well contrived, that they speak out their forgery.

Alas!

Alas! whereas St. *Paul* being put to Glory, of Visions and Revelations, was to run back fourteen years for one. Their Saints are found in them every day. Are they not very credible Stories they tell of Christs appearing to some of their She-Saints, and kissing them, giving them Rings, being married to them, and celebrating nuptial rites, making them drink out of his side, and leaving on them the prints of his wounds, with many other such like apparitions of the Virgin, and other Saints, which were either forgeries, dreams, or the effects of melancholy, or hysterical distempers; and yet these extravagant fables are given out to the people as sacred pieces of Divine Revelations.

But the inspiration of the holy Writers, on which we found our Faith, was proved by their miracles which they wrought publickly in the sight of many, and in the presence of their adversaries, many of whom were convinced by them; and it is certain, that whosoever offers any thing to anothers belief, pretending he comes to him in the Name of God, must have

have some evident proof of his Divine Mission : since none are bound to believe him barely on his own Testimony: Otherwise there should be no end of Impostures, if every pretender to Divine Inspiration were to be believed without proof. Now the way it must be proved, is by some evidence of Gods extraordinary assisting such a person, which appeared alwayes either in Prophecies, or Miracles, but chiefly in miracles under the New Testament: and therefore both Christ and his Apostles appeal to the mighty works they wrought, as the great confirmation of their Doctrine. If then there be new Doctrines brought into the Church, they must have the like confirmation, otherwise they are not to be believed.

But here those of that Church think they triumph: For miracles they have in abundance; not a Relique they have, but hath wrought mighty wonders, nor a Countrey-Saint, but the Curat of the place can gravely tell a great many deeds of his puissance; nor want the Images their marvellous atchievements, but wondrously

wondrous are the feats the Hosty hath performed; Here I am upon a sad Subject of that trade of lies and fictions, where-with the *Merchants of that Babylon* have so long traffiqued; of which the sincerer among themselves are ashamed. How ridiculous are many of their miraculous narrations? Was it a worthy piece of the Angelical Ministration, for Angels to go trotting over Sea and Land with a load of Timber and Stones of the *Virgins house*, till at length they set it down at *Loretto*, that great devotions might be shown to it? It is a goodly story for to tell of a Saint that walked so far after his head was cut off, with it in his arms, resting in some places to draw breath? yet he will pass for an Infidel that should doubt of this, at *St. Denis-Church*. Who can look on the lives of the late Saints of that Church, without nausea? *Gregories Dialogues* begun this trade, which indeed hath thriven well since. The miracles of the Christian faith were grave and solemn actions; but what ridiculous scenical stories, not to say blasphemous ones, meet us about the miracles



acles of their Saints? He that would know this, may read the Lives of St. Francis, and St. Dominic, St. Bridgit, and the two St. Catherines, and he will be satisfied to a surfeit. The Miracles also of Christ and his Apostles were acted publicly, in the view of all; but most of these narrations of their Wonders were transacted in corners, none being witnesses but persons concerned to own the cheat: And the Doctrine of Equivocating was a good cordial for the ease of their Consciences, though they swore what they knew false, according to the natural sense of the words which they uttered. Thus we have many fables of Christs appearing in the Hosty, sometimes as a child, and sometimes as crucified, when but a very few of the whole company present, were honoured with that amazing sight.

Further, the Miracles of the Christian Faith were written in the times in which they were acted, that so enquiries might have been made into their falshood; and the powers that then governed,

verned, being enemies to the Faith, it was safe for its opposers, to have proved and discovered their forgery, had any such been. But many of the Miracles of *Rome* are not heard of, till some Ages, at least Years be past, whereby they are secure from the after-game of a discovery; and he were a stout man that would adventure to question the verity of these pretences at *Rome*, where it is the interest of that Church to have them all believed, without once questioning them. But how comes it, that in Heretical Countreys (as they call them) where there is more need of those Miracles, and where they might be more irrefragably proved, if true, since the Examiners of them were not to be suspected, yet none of these mighty works do shew themselves forth? Certainly, that they are to this day so rife in *Italy* and *Spain*, and so scant in *Britain*, is a shrewd ground to apprehend *Legerdemain*, and forgery, in the accounts we get of their later Saints. And indeed the Contrivers of these Stories have not managed their design by half,

half, so well as need was; for they have bestowed as many of them on one person, as might have Sainted the half of an Order. But the gain that is made by new Saints, and new Reliques, is well enough known; not to speak of the general advantage that Church pretends to draw from it.

In end, though some things among them did seem to surpass the known powers of Nature, these ought not to prevail upon us for departing from the truth; *since though an Angel from Heaven preached another Gospel, he is to be accursed, Gal. 1.8.* If then they have so changed the Christian Doctrine by their Additions and Inventions, that it is become thereby as another Gospel; none of the seemingly Seraphical appearances they may have among them, though true, ought to reconcile us to it, and that the rather, since we were expressly guarded against this Imposture, by St. Paul, who gave it as an Indication of the Son of Perdition, that his coming was after the power of Satan, with all power and signs, and

lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, 2 Thess. 2. 9, 10. And it is a part of their curse, that they are given up to strong delusions, to believe lies: *the Beast also that appeared to St. John Rev. 13. 13. did great wonders, so that he made Fire come down from Heaven, in the sight of men, and deceived many, that dwell on the Earth, by these Miracles which he had power to do.* But to conclude this, my greatest quarrel, at these forgeries of Miracles is, that the people being taught to believe them, and the Miracles of the Gospel, with an equal certainty, since they have the Testimony of the Church, for both, and they seeing such evident Characters of fraud and forgery on these supposed miracles, whereby they are convinced of their falshood, are thereby in danger of suspecting all the Miracles of the Gospel, as the tricks of subdolous and crafty men; whereby they run head-long to an Atheistical disbelieving the truth of all alike. And thus far we have found how opposite that Church is, to the Spouse of Christ, since

since her Doctrines are so ill founded, and look so like cunningly devised fables, without the authority of divine inspiration, or the proof of true Miracles.

The next Character of our Faith is, its perspicuity, and simplicity, all being called to the clear light of the day in it, and every part of it being so genuine, that it is apparent, it was not the contrivance of designing men, that by the belief of it they might obtain the power, and possess the riches of the World: And therefore there are no secret Doctrines in our Faith, which must be kept up from the Vulgar, whereby the Pastors of Christendom may have dominion over their souls: But what must we conclude of them, who by all means study to keep all of their Communion ignorant, as if devotion were thereby nourished; and allow them not the use of the Scriptures in their Mother-tongue, nor a worship which they can understand, whereby it is, that they who occupy the room of unlearned, cannot say Amen, at the giving of thanks, since they

*they understand not what is said.* To this might be added their implicate Faith, to all the Doctrines of the Church, without further inquiries; and their blind obedience to the *Confessarius*, be he never so ignorant and carnal. These are certainly darkening opinions, and practices, and far different from the methods of the Apostles, in preaching the Gospel, who withheld from the people nothing of the Counsel of God, and studied the enlightening their understandings, as well as the enlivening of their wills.

But further, how much of interest appears in the Doctrines of *Rome*, which tend to the exalting or enriching the Papacy, and inferiour Clergy, for it is visible what a trade they drive by them, and all the contrivances, all the projectours in *Europe* ever fell upon for enriching their Masters Treasury, falls short of the projects of Purgatory, the Treasure of the Church, Indulgences, and the Popes absolute authority, in making abrogating, and dispensing with all Positive Laws. Neither is there more  
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of design to be found in the *Alcoran*, than in the Mysteries of that *Caliph* of the *Spiritual Babylon*. And we may guess of their concernedness in these matters, since a gentler censure may be hoped for upon the violation of the greatest of the Laws of God, than upon the least contradiction to their idolized Interests. The one is the constant subject of their Studies, and Sermons, whereas the other is seldom minded.

The third Character of our Faith, is, that it is rational and suitable to our Souls, God having fitted it, and framed them so harmoniously, that they are congenial one to another. It is true, the Mysteries about God and Christ are exalted above the reach of our faculties, but even reason it self teacheth that it must be so, since if there be a God, he must be infinite and incomprehensible, and therefore it is not to be wondered, if the Scriptures offer some Mysteries to us about God and Christ, which choak and stifle the impressions we are apt to take of things. But in these, it is visible,



ble, that the Object is so disproportioned to our faculties, that it is impossible we can reach or comprehend it; but as for the other parts of Religion, they are all so distinctly plain, that the reasonableness, as well as the authority of them, serve to commend them to us; but how void are they of this, who have made one of the chief Articles of their Faith, and the greatest matter of their worship, that which is, not only beyond, but contrary to, the most common impressions of Nature, which teacheth us, to believe our senses when under no lesion, and duly applied to a proper object. For indeed, in that case, we cannot really doubt but things are as they appear to us; for we cannot believe it mid-night, when we clearly see the Sun in the Meridian; nay, and our Faith rests on the evidences our senses give, since we believe, because Miracles were clearly seen by these who first received the Faith: And, *Christ said, believe me, for the very works sake, Joh. 14. 11.* And so their sight of these works was, a certain ground for their

ned their belief, therefore the senses unvitiated, fixing on a proper object, through a due mean, are infallible; therefore what our sight, our taste, and our touch tell us, is Bread and Wine, must be so still, and cannot be imagined to have changed its substance, upon the recital of the five words. Shall I add to this, that throng of absurdities which croud about this opinion? For if it be true, then a body may be in more places at once, triumphing in glory in one, and sacrificed in a thousand other places: And a large body may be crouded into the narrow space of a thin Wafer, they holding it to be not only wholly in the whole Wafer, but also intirely in every crumb of it: A body can be without dimensions and accidents without a subject; these must be confessed to be among the highest of unconcievables; and yet these Miracles must be believed to be produced every day, in above a hundred thousand places. Certainly, he hath a sturdy belief who can swallow over all these absurdities, without choaking on them.

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It is little less unconceivable, to imagine, that a man of no eximious sanctity (nay, perhaps of noted impiety) nor extraordinarily knowing (nay, perhaps grossly ignorant) in Theological Matters, shall have the Holy Ghost so absolutely at his command, that whatever he decrees must be the Dictates of the Spirit. And what an unconceivable mystery is the Treasure of the Church, and the Popes Authority to dispense it as he will? No less conceivable is the efficacy of the Sacraments, by the work wrought; nor is any thing more affronting to reason, than the barbarous worship. And of a piece with this is the blind subjection is pleaded for the *Confessarius* his Injunctions, and their opinions of expiating their sins by a company of little trifling penances, which tend not to the cleansing the Soul, nor killing of the life of sin, much less can be able to appease God, either of their own inbred worth, or by reason of any value God is pleased to set on them, either by Command or Promise. But should I reckon up every thing is among them

ma them that choaks reason, I should dwell  
city too long on this, and reckon over most of  
tra the things have been through the whole  
olly Discourse hinted, which seem to stand  
ball in the most diametrical opposition to the  
his clearest impressions of all mens reasons.

rees But to bring my Enquiry to an issue,  
And easiness and gentleness are by Christ ap-  
the plied to his yoke, laws, and burden; and  
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No give to the carnal man, by mortifying  
Sa his lusts, and contradicting all his inordi-  
r is nate and unlimited desires, yet by the  
an rational faculties and powers they are  
ece both easily understood and practised. In-  
led deed Religion lies in few things, and its  
nd chief work is the reforming and purify-  
by ing the inward man, where it mainly  
es, dwells and exerts its force and virtue;  
ho but these who have added so much, both  
ch to be believed and done, beyond what  
of our Lord prescribed, as they accuse his  
of unfaithfulness, so bring unsupportable  
n, burdens on the Consciences of Christi-  
ut ans: These therefore who lead out the  
g mind, by presenting a great many foreign  
m objects .

objects to it, do introduce superannuated Judaism, instead of that liberty Christ brought with him unto the World. But shall I number up here all the Impositions of that Church, whose numbers are great as well as their nature grievous; for it is a study to know them all, but what a pain must it be to perform them? It is a work which will take up a great deal of time to understand the *Rubricks of their Missals, Breviaries, Rituals, and Pontificals*. In a word, they have left the unity and simplicity of Religion, and set up instead of it a lifeless heap of Ordinances, which must oppress, but cannot relieve the Consciences of their Disciples.

Shall I add to this, the severity of some of their Orders, into which by unalterable Vows they are engaged their whole lives? Now whatever fitness might be in such Discipline, upon occasions, for beating down the body or humbling of the mind, yet it must be very tyrannical to bind the perpetual observance of these on any by an oath, for thereby all the

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rest of their lives may become insupportably bitter to them, wherein they stand obliged, under perjury, to the perpetual observance of some severe Discipline; which, though at first in a novitious fervour might have had its good effects on them, yet that drying up, it will afterwards have no other effect but the constant dejecting of the soul, and so their life will be a rack to them by their perpetual toil in these austerities. This I speak of those who seem the chief Ornaments of that Church, whose Devotion doth for most part turn to outwards, and rests in the strict observance of their rules, not without voluntary assumed mortifications, which they add to them, but wherein they for most part glory, and so the life of pride and self-love (the subtillest of all our enemies) is fed and nourished by them: Neither can we think, that these, whose exercises are so much external, can be so recollected for the inward and serene breathings of the Mind after God and Christ, without which, all externals, though they seem

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to make a *fair shew in the flesh*, yet are but a skelet of lifeless and insipid things. But indeed they have studied to remove this objection of the uneasiness of their Religion, by accommodating it so, that the worst of men may be secure of Heaven and enjoy their lusts both, according to the corrupt conduct of some of their spiritual Fathers: But what I have hinted of the uneasiness of their Religion, is taken from the Nature of their Devotions, in their highest altitude and elevation.

And thus far I have pursued my Design, in the tract whereof I have not been void of a great deal of pain and sorrow, for what pleasure can any find by discovering so much wickedness, and so many errors in the Christened Regions of the World, and see the holy and beautiful Places, wherein the former Ages worshipped God in the Spirit, turned to be habitations of Idols and graven Images, by which God is provoked to jealousy. God is my witness, how these thoughts have entertained me with horreur and regret.



regret, all the while I have considered them: And that I am so far from being glad, that I have found so much corruption in the *Roman* Church, that it is not without the greatest antipathy to my nature imaginable, that I have payed this duty to truth, by asserting it with the discovery of so many Impostures, which have so long abused the Christian world; and if any heat or warmth hath slipped from my Pen, I must protest sincerely, it is not the effect of anger, or passion, but of a tender and zealous compassion, for those souls who are either already blinded with these delusions, or do incline towards *those paths which lead to the chambers of death.*

I am none of those who justifie rage or bitterness against those in errors, for if we had the Spirit of Christ in us, we should mourn over, and lament their misery, who lye under so much darkness. And this is a sure character to judge if our zeal for God and his truth be Divine and Evangelical, if it make us pour out Rivers of tears for those that have gone out

out of the way, rather than streams of Fire against them. That zeal which raiseth melting sorrow, tender compassion, and fervent prayers for those we see erring, is Christ-like, and worthy of that meek and charitable spirit which the Gospel so much recommends: Whereas that which boils out in rage and foam against such as err, and designs their ruin, and mischief, and studies how to persecute, rather than convert them, and kindles in men bitter aversion to their persons, together with rude harshness in their behaviour to them, is all Antichristian and carnal. My design therefore in this discourse is to provoke pity rather than wrath, and tears more than flames, towards those deceived multitudes, that we may pray for them, rather than rail at them.

But my chief aim is to perswade all who love their souls, to consider the danger of continuing in the Communion of a Church, that hath not only fallen from her first love and purity, but hath in so many great and essential points corrup-

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corrupted our most holy Faith, and adul-  
terated the pure sincerity of our wor-  
ship.

I shall not here search into the depths  
of the Mercies of God, how far they  
may reach any of that Communion,  
nor examin how far they hold the founda-  
tion Christ, notwithstanding of all  
the base superstructures they have reared  
upon it, nor shall I consider how far  
invincible ignorance may excuse the  
guilt of an error, nor how applicable  
this may be to them, nor shall I discuss  
how far the private differing from these  
errors may in many things secure some of  
the individuals of that Communion  
from the general guilt lies over them;  
upon all these particulars many things  
may be said, and none alive is more wil-  
ling to stretch his invention, for finding  
out grounds to fix his Charity on, than  
my self. But all I can devise falls short  
of a full and satisfying excuse for those  
who being educated in the knowledge  
of the truth and sincerity of the Gospel, do  
fall away into the errors and superstiti-

ons of that Church; nor can I imagine what their temptations should be to it, except one of two: The first is, that they desire a sensible Religion, and therefore loath the simplicity and spirituallity of the Gospel, and love to have some glorious objects in Worship to strike on, and affect their senses: But however this may make impressions on the grosser rabble, yet certainly, any that considers that the perfection of man lies in his reason, and not in his outward senses, and that the exaltation of reason is Religion; he must confess that the less it dwell in the senses, and the more inward it become on the reason, it is the more suitable both to the nature of God, of Religion, and of the rational faculties. But the other consideration that may draw many to that Religion, is yet worse, which is, because in it a great allowance is given to all manner of sin, by the treacherous conduct of some Confessors, who perswade men of Heaven, on terms very easie and pleasing to flesh and blood. And hence it is that

we see very few who have expressed any affection to a devout life, abandoning us to go over to the *Roman Communion*, most of those who do so, (except it be one of a thousand) being as void of virtue, as ignorant of the nature of true Religion; that we may say, *Joh. 2. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they had not gone out from us.*

These being the only visible tentations to entice any from our Communion to theirs, it is hard to preserve any great degrees of Charity for them: For a third tentation being that only which can work on a devout mind, takes with so few among us, that I need scarce name it, which is the solitary and retired houses among them for leading a devout and strict life, and the excellent Books of Devotion have been published by many of that Communion. This I know wrought mightily on one, and made him many times wish that he could with a good Conscience throw himself into one of these Religious houses; but the

consideration of these great corruptions lay so in his way, that without the doing the greatest force on his Conscience imaginable, and thereby securing damnation to himself by complying with things he judged so damnable, he durst not do it. Yet for his further satisfaction, he went among them, to see if their Worship appeared more amiable in practise, then it did in Writings; but I have heard him often declare, that though his mind was as free of prepossessions, as perhaps ever mans was, yet all he conceived of them, even from the Writings of their adversaries, was nothing compared to the impressions which the sight of their Worship left upon him, it appearing so Histrionical in all its circumstances, and so idolatrous in its substance, especially as he saw the Vulgar practise it. And for their Religious Houses, he was among a great many of all Orders, but was far from meeting with that spirit of devotion, he had hoped to find among them, for they always magnified their Order, and the little external austerities

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and devotions of it, but for genuine humility, a delight in God, and Christ, abstraction from the world, (for all their frocks and retirements,) sincere heavenly-mindedness, and fervent Charity to the Brethren, he regretted he had met with little of it among them. And that he found the several Orders full of emulation and envy at other Orders, and of heats among themselves, which made him see, that he who meant to lead a devout life, must choose another Sanctuary than any of these he saw in that Communion.

I deny not, that it is the greatest defect of the Reformation, that there are not in it such encouragements to a devout life; though the intanglements of Vows to things without our power, is a manifest invasion of the Christian liberty; and to languish out ones life in a tract of lasie Devotion, without studying to serve God in our Generation, seems contrary to the intendment of Religion, a great many of its Precepts being about those Duties we owe our



Neighbours: Yet for all this, it is not to be denied to be a great defect that we want recluse Houses, for a stricter training up of those who design to lead a spiritual life, and to serve in the Gospel, that their minds being rightly formed before their first setting out they may be well qualified and furnished for their work. Such Houses might also be retreating places for old Persons, after they had served their Generation, and were no more able to undergo toil and fatigue; they might be also Sanctuaries for devout Persons, in times of their greater afflictions or devotions. But for all this want, it fixeth no imputation on our Church, her Doctrine, or Worship, that she is so poor, as not to be able to maintain such Seminaries. But on the way, it is no great character of the Piety of their Church, that she abounds so with great and rich dotations, when we consider the Arts they used for acquiring them, by making People believe themselves secure of Heaven by such donations: Indeed, had we got our People befooled

befooled into such perswasions, the cheat might have prospered as well in our hands; but we are not of those, *who handle the Word of God deceitfully*; nor will we draw the People even to do good with a crafty guile, *or lye for God*.

But now, as a conclusion to this Discourse, I must consider, if all things among us be so sound and well grounded, that with a quiet Mind and good Conscience every one may hold Communion with our Church, and hope for Salvation in it, I shall therefore briefly run over the Nature and Characters of the Christian Faith, to see if any contradiction to them, or any part of them, be found among us. And first of all, we worship God in Spirit, as a Spiritual Being, with suitable Adorations, which we direct to no Image nor Symbol of the Divine Presence, but teach, that we ought not to figure God to any corporeal being, nor in our thoughts; neither do we worship any, beside God the Father, Son, and Spirit: We also worship Christ, but as he is God, and

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hath the fulness of the God-head dwelling in him bodily: Angels indeed we honour, but knowing them to be our fellow-servants, we cannot pray to them, or fall down before them: We count the holy Virgin *blest among women*, but dare give her no share of the glory due to her Son: All the Saints we reverence and love, but knowing God to be a *jealous God*, we cannot divide that honour among them, which is only due to him, and therefore do neither worship them, their Images, nor their Reliques. We desire also to offer up to God such Sacrifices as we know are well-pleasing to him, *Prayers, Praises, broken and contrite Hearts, and our Souls and Bodies*, but reject all Charms and Enchantments from our Worship, as contrary to the *reasonable service which is acceptable to God*, and do retain the genuine simplicity of the Gospel-worship, in a plain and intelligible stile and form, without any mixtures drawn from Judaism or Gentilism: And thus there is nothing among us contrary to the first design of Religion.

And

And as little will be found against the second, which is the honour due to Christ in all his Offices: We teach our People to study the Scriptures, and to examine all we say by them, and exhort them to depend on God, who by his Spirit will teach them as well as us; neither do we pretend to an authority over their Consciences, but acknowledge our selves men of like infirmities with the People, who are all called to be a *Royal Priesthood*; and thus we honour Christs Prophetical Office, by founding our Faith only on the Divine Authority of the Scriptures. *We also believe, there is no Name given under Heaven by which we can be saved, but the Name of Christ, who laid down his Life a ransom for our Souls, that by his Cross we might be reconciled to God; and it is to that one Sacrifice, that we teach all to fly for obtaining remission of sins and the favour of God, trusting only to it, and to nothing we have done or can do, knowing that when we have done all we can do we are but unprofitable servants; much less do we hope for any thing*

thing from any of our fellow-creatures :  
 We apply our Souls to no Intercessour  
 but Christ, and trust to no Satisfaction  
 but his, and we acknowledge him the  
 only King of his Church, whose Laws  
 must bind it to the end of the World.  
 Neither do we acknowledge any other  
 Authority, but his, over our Consciences.  
 It is true, in things indifferent, he hath  
 left a power with his Church to deter-  
 mine in those Matters, which may tend  
 to advance order, edification, peace, and  
 decency; but as the Church cannot add  
 to our Faith, so neither can it institute  
 new pieces of Worship, which shall  
 commend us to God, or bind any load  
 upon our Souls. We own a Ministerial  
 Authority in all the Pastors of the  
 Church, which they derive from Jesus  
 Christ, and not from any visible Head  
 on earth, and therefore they are only  
 subject to Christ. We also hold, that  
 the Civil Powers are of Christ, whose  
 Gospel binds the duty of obedience to  
 them more closely on us, and therefore  
 if they do wrong, we leave them to  
 Christ's

Christ's Tribunal, who set them up, but pretend to no power from his Gospel to coerce or resist them; and thus we honour Christ in all his Offices, and so are conform to the second branch of the design of our Faith.

We also receive the third with the same fidelity, and whatever the practices of too too many among us be, yet there is no ground to quarrel our Doctrine; we preach repentance to all, and study to convince them of their misery, and lost estate, that they may mourn for their sins, and turn to God by a new course of life; we preach Faith through Christ in God, as that which unites our souls to him, by which we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. We stir up our people *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, strength, soul, and mind, and to wait for his Son Christ Jesus, who is the hope of glory and shall change our vile bodies into the likeness of his glorious Body.* And from this great motive do we press our people to the study of *holiness, without which they shall never see God.*

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We send them to the ten Commandments for the rule of their lives, whose exposition we chiefly take *from Christ's Sermon on the mount*; neither can we be charged for having taught the People, to break one of the least of these Commandments. We exhort all our hearers to make the life of Christ the pattern of theirs, and to learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart; neither can our Church be accused of having taught any Carnal Doctrines, for gratifying the base Interests of the flesh, or for ingrossing the power or treasure of the World, the subsistence of our Church-men, being but a lively-hood, and not a treasure. In a word, *we preach Christ and him Crucified*, and all the rules of his Gospel, for ordering the conversation aright, without adding, or taking from it; and thus our conformity to the third branch of Christianity appears.

We teach also according to the fourth branch of Christianity, the Doctrines of Charity, neither do we condemn any who holds the foundation, though in some



some lesser matter they differ from us; but hope they may be saved as well as we. We abhor the Doctrine of cruel persecuting of any for their Consciences: The outmost we allow of, or desire of that nature, being the preservation of our own Societies, pure from the contagion of other Traffiquers, and the driving from us those who do so disturb us. All the authority we give the Church, is Paternal, and not Tyrannical, our Church-men we hold to be the Pastors, but not the Lords of the flock, who are obliged to feed them sincerely, both by their Doctrine, Labours, and whole Conversation; but we pretend to no blind obedience due to their directions, and count them noble Christians, who search and try all they say by that Test of the Scriptures: We send the People to confess their sins to God, from whom only we teach them to expect their pardon, and pretend to no other keys, but Ministerial ones, over publick and known Scandals. In our Worship, as all do understand it, so every

every one may joyn in it. And in the number, use, and simplicity of our Sacraments, we have religiously adhered to the Rules of the Gospel, we holding them to be solemn federal Rites of our Stipulation with God, in which if we do worthily partake of them, we are assured of the Presence of the Divine Spirit and Grace, for uniting our Souls more intirely to God, and advancing us in all the ways of the Spirit of Life; and if the Institution of them in the Gospel, be compared with our Administration of them, it will appear how close we have kept to our Rule.

And thus we see how exactly conform the Doctrine of our Church is to the whole Branches of the Christian Design; upon which it is not to be doubted, but the Characters of the Christian Religion will also fit ours: We found our Faith only on the Scriptures, and though we pay a great deal of venerable esteem to the Churches of God during their purity, which continued above four Centuries, and so be very willing to be deter-

determined in Rituals and Matters that are external and indifferent by their Opinions and Practices, yet our Faith settles only on the Word of God, and not on the Traditions of Men; neither do we believe every Spirit that pretends to Rapt and Visions, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God or not, and *though an Angel should preach to us another Gospel, we would hold him accursed.* The Miracles we trust to, as the Proofs of the Truth of that Revelation which we believe, are only those contained in the Scriptures; and though we believe there was a wonder-working power continued for some time in the Church, yet we make a great difference betwixt what we historically credit, and what we religiously believe; neither will we, for supporting our Interest or Authority, have recourse to that base trade of forging lying Wonders, but we rest satisfied with the Miracles Christ and his Apostles wrought for the proof of the Religion we own, since what we believe, is no other than what they taught; and

and therefore we leave the trade of forging new Miracles, to them who have forged a new Religion.

And for the plain genuines of the Gospel, we have not departed a step from it, since we call upon our People by all the motives we can devise, and with all the earnestness we are Masters of, to receive full and clear Instruction in all the Matters of our Religion, which we distinctly lay open to them. And nothing of Interest or Design can be charged on us, who pretend to nothing but to be the *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; nor have we offered to sophisticate the simplicity of our Worship by any additions to it, for the determining about some particular forms is no addition to Worship, but only the following forth of these Precepts of doing all things to edification, peace, and order: But an addition to Worship is, when any new piece of Divine Service is invented, with a pretence of our being more acceptable to God thereby, or of our receiving Grace by that conveyance; and there-

therefore any Rites we have, as they are not without some hints from Scripture, so we pretend not to become any way acceptable to God by them.

Further, we teach no irrational nor unconceivable Doctrine: It is true there are Mysteries in our Faith, and even reason it self teacheth, that these must be unconceivable; but for all our other perswasions they are such as may be well made out to the rational faculties of man; therefore we do not betake ourselves to that Sanctuary, that we must be believed, assert what we please; but we assert nothing but what we offer to evince by the clearest proofs. And in fine, we add nothing to the burdensomeness of the Laws of Christ, but teach and propose them as we have them from his Gospel, without adding, changing, or altering a tittle from the first Institution.

And so far have I considered the Doctrine and Worship of our Church; wherein if I could justify all our *Practices*, as well as I can do our *Principles*,  
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there were no grounds to fear hurt from all the Cavils of Mortals. But for bad practices, whatsoever matter of regrave they may furnish us with, they afford none for separation: Therefore, there is no ground that can justify a separation from our Church, much less warrant the turning over from us to the Communion of *Rome*: And thus far have I pursued my designed Enquiry, which was, if with a safe Conscience any might adjoin themselves to the Popish Religion, or if Communion with our Church was to be kept and continued in; and have found great grounds to assert the evident hazards of the former, so that no man to whom his salvation and welfare is dear, can, or ought to joyn himself to that Church; on the other hand, without renting the Body of Christ, none can, or ought to depart from our Churches: But I leave the perusal and considering of these things to the serious Reader, to whom I hope they may give some satisfaction, if he bring with him to the Enquiry an  
atten-

attentive, serious, and unbyassed mind.  
And I leave the success of this, and every  
other attempt of this Nature, for the  
clearing of Divine truth, with him who  
is the only Fountain of Blessings, who  
is over all, God blessed for evermore,  
*Amen.*

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**F I N I S.**

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### *Errata.*

**P**age 16. line 6. for formerly read formally. l. 24.  
Abuses *r.* Abases. p. 30. l. 14. forewarnes *r.* warnes.  
p. 51. l. 1. where *r.* what. p. 52. l. 9. but *r.* yet. p. 54.  
l. 24. dele a. p. 64. l. 18. betwixt add that. p. 91. a *r.*  
this. p. 99. l. 5. enhansing *r.* engrossing. l. 8. transmit-  
ting *r.* transmuting. p. 103. l. 16. since *r.* for. p. 110.  
l. 18. or *r.* for. p. 138. l. 13. unity *r.* purity.

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